

Poems

by

Mary E. Coleridge



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Ex Libris

C. K. OGDEN

St John Lucas

—

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

<http://www.archive.org/details/poemsmary00cole>

Poems

by

Mary E. Coleridge

Poems

by

Mary E. Coleridge

London

Elkin Mathews, Vigo Street

1908

PR 600
029 A17
113

Second Edition

P R E F A C E

POETRY needs no introduction ; but with the present volume a few words of explanation seem desirable. As a poetess, Mary Coleridge never came before the public under her own name ; her printed verse was always either anonymous or signed with the pseudonym *Λυδοδος* — a name taken from George MacDonald's romance, "Phantastes," where it is evidently intended to bear the meaning of "Wanderer." Probably several reasons or feelings prompted this concealment ; the one by which my own arguments were always met was the fear of tarnishing the name which an ancestor had made illustrious in English poetry.

She would close the discussion with a gay and characteristic inconsistency—"Never, as long as I live ! When I am dead, you may do as you like." Now that death has so soon taken her at her word, I cannot help thinking myself justified in acting on that permission, however lightly given ; and I believe that no poems are less likely than these to jar upon lovers of "Christabel" and "The Ancient Mariner."

The poems of *Ἀνθός* have already made friends for themselves, and their re-appearance in a single volume, accessible to all, has long been desired. Those numbered I. to XLVIII. in the present collection were issued in 1896 by Mr. Daniel, from his private press at Oxford : but the edition was limited to one hundred and twenty-five copies, of which about one-third are now, it is believed, in America, and the remainder in this country practically beyond the reach of a purchaser.

Of the pieces in that volume—"Fancy's Following"—eleven were used, with seven new ones, to make up "Fancy's Guerdon," a little paper book published in the following year by Mr. Elkin Mathews in his "Shilling Garland." The seven new ones are those here given as Nos. XLIX.-LV. They are followed by twelve poems—Nos. LVI.-LXVII.—which appeared in 1898 in a volume by several authors, called "The Garland"; and after these are placed ten others—Nos. LXVIII.-LXXVII.—contributed singly to the *Spectator*, the *Pilot*, and other periodicals during the years 1900-1907.

These seventy-seven pieces, then, form the whole of the poetical levy of *Ἀνθός*: and although they are now, on setting forth under their true colours, to be finally merged in a much greater company, I have thought it best to place them at the head of the column and

in their original order, so that they may preserve something of their old association and be the more easily greeted by their friends. But it must not be supposed that the hundred and sixty poems which follow them are all later in date of composition, or, in my judgment, inferior to them in beauty.

Mary Coleridge wrote verse from an early age : the present collection is the gleanings of twenty-five years, and every year of the twenty-five has contributed something to the sheaf. She has left, perhaps, three hundred poems ; but some of them deal with things of private interest only, some are light verse written by way of correspondence to intimate friends, some remain unfinished or uncorrected ; so that the two hundred and thirty-seven now printed must be accepted not as an instalment, but as the sum of her achievement in poetry. Nothing remains over, which could give a new

pleasure to her admirers, or throw fresh light upon her deeper thoughts, or affect the ultimate verdict.

It might, perhaps, have been possible to date most of the pieces : but this is the less necessary because their order in time does not in any way coincide with their order in merit ; and it would have been misleading, because a poem when written was often laid aside for years, and then remodelled or retouched with an almost transforming power. It is possible that some of those which I have included had not yet come to their destined perfection, and one or two might in the end have been rejected by their author, as being intentional experiments in a manner not her own. To this latter class belong the lines "To a Tree" and "From my Window," of which I retain the first on principle, as having been actually published, and the second from preference, because it

seems to me characteristic not only of one poet, but of two.

It seemed worth while to mention these exceptional poems, because in the general mass of her work Mary Coleridge, though legitimately descended from many poets, was the imitator of none. Her poems were the offspring of character not less than of intellect ; they possess, as her friend Mr. Bridges has said in a recent article,* “the delicate harmony of special excellences that makes originality . . . and often exhibit imagination of a very rare kind, conveyed by the identical expression of true feeling and artistic insight. . . . It is their intimacy and spontaneity that give them so great a value. They will be her portrait, an absolutely truthful picture of a wondrously beautiful and gifted spirit, whom thought could not make melancholy, nor sorrow

* *Cornhill Magazine* for November, 1907.

sad : not in conventional attitude, nor with fixed features, nor lightly to be interpreted, nor even always to be understood, but mystical rather and enigmatical ; a poetic effigy, the only likeness of worth ; a music self-born of her contact with the wisdom and passion of the world, and which all the folly and misery of man could provoke only to gentle and loving strains."

I have quoted this passage at length, because it is, generous as it sounds, a piece of analysis rather than of eulogy : it comes to me, a friend and admirer of even older standing, as a bare and careful statement of truth, fitted, by its exactness, to my present purpose of explanation. To those who do not read it in its context, I must add one word more. It will not be difficult, upon a superficial view, to charge the writer of these poems with inconsistency. Though she always in the end found the power to transmute sorrow into a more

perfect mode of being, yet there were times when she wrote down in frank words the bitterness of a moment's agony. There were also times when she expressed with complete sincerity a fancy or a mood the opposite of one equally sincere and well recorded. Lastly, there were times when she entered very deep shadows filled with strange shapes, that may move a timid soul or two to ask if it be safe to follow her. It is true that her thought, though clothed in so slender a form, has the courage of the strong, and holds its way through the night like Milton's dreadless angel; but, like him, it is always unsullied, always unscathed, always returning towards the gates of Light.

HENRY NEWBOLT.

Nov. 6, 1907.

INDEX TO FIRST LINES

ABOUT the little chambers of my heart, 4
A crazy fool am I, and mad, 207
Across the golden clouds gray clouds are flying, 128
A green eye—and a red—in the dark, 103
Ah, I have striven, I have striven, 124
Ah, there is no abiding, 160
Ah, who shall Praise receive, 168
All around was dumb and still, 15
All day long he has been busy, 181
All greenery hath faded from the trees, 144
All that love hath to give to me is given, 171
An old man leaning on a gate, 199
Are the dead as calm as those, 154
Arm thee! Arm thee! Forth upon the road, 146
As a maiden caught and bound, 193
As Christ the Lord was passing by, 20
As darting swallows skim across a pool, 26
As I went singing over the earth, 171
Ask me not how it came, 54
"A voice! A voice!" I cried. No music stills, 67

BEFORE Thine Altar on my bended knees, 189
Be still, my beating heart, be still, 190

Bid me remember, O my gracious Lord, 85
Blue is Our Lady's colour, 29
Bring not the lily hither ; she is pale, 142
Build over me no marble monument, 194
By a dim road, o'ergrown with dry thin grass, 159
By a lake below the mountain, 65

CHILD of my love ! though thou be bright as day, 53
Come back to me my swallow, 87
Come, gentle ghosts, from that far-distant shore, 203
Come, long-awaited dawn of wondrous Night, 59
Country roads are yellow and brown, 107

DEAR builder of the Bridge, with thee I stood, 116
Deep are thy waters, Love, in every heart, 110
Deep in the heart of Winter lies a day, 90
Depart from me. I know Thee not, 94
Die, Youth, die, there are none to lament thee, 166

EGYPT's might is tumbled down, 121
Even to one I dare not tell, 35
Eyes, what are they? Coloured glass, 16

FAIR, O Nature, thy fulfilling, 133
Farewell, my joy ! For other hearts the Spring, 161
Farewell, my Loneliness, 106
Fighting would I have you die, 173
Find me, O my true love, find me, 88
" *First* " in my heart? Why, she is all my heart, 10
Forgive? O yes ! How lightly, lightly said, 117
Full many a painter in the early days, 12

GIVE him his martial honours, for he fought, 142
Give me no gift ! Less than thyself were nought, 162
Go at the deepest, darkest dead of night, 27
" God comfort all who mourn ! " I said, 23
Gold I can give—and what would it avail thee, 189
Good Friday in my heart ! Fear and affright, 148
Gorgeous grew the common walls about me, 201
Grant me but a day, love, 2

HEAVILY plumed the stately elm-tree hung, 140
Heavy is my heart, 3
Here would the aged pilgrim gladly stay, 196
Her face, for utter stillness, hath no peer, 147
Her yellow hair is soft, and her soft eyes, 71
He who has lived in sunshine all day long, 207
How, was it I—I that unmoved, 35

I ASK of thee, love, nothing but relief, 51
I asked of Night, that she would take me, 6
I called you, fiery spirits, and ye came, 111
I cannot love you well, love, 174
I chanced to see, upon a day, 87
I did not see. How could I know, 101
I envy not the dead that rest, 198
I had a boat, and the boat had wings, 211
I have been there before thee, O my love, 34
I have forged me in sevenfold heats, 11
I have not been as Joshua when he fought, 167
I have not loved the gold of the mine, 165
I have walked a great while over the snow, 44
I have wept for those who on this turning earth, 84
I know not how it is with me—the light, 195

I may not call what many call divine, 11
never thought that you could mourn, 183
In the blue and golden summer weather, 169
In the little red house by the river, 62
I sat before my glass one day, 8
I saw a cross of burning gold, 203
I saw a stable, low and very bare, 83
I shall forget you, O my dead, 133
Is this wide world not large enough to fill thee, 47
I think that Sadness is an idiot born, 211
It is because you were my friend, 23
I tossed my friend a wreath of roses, wet, 17
It's a great deal better to lose than win, 200
It was a bird of Paradise, 152
It was but the lightest word of the King, 173
It were too strong a bliss for thee to die, 206
I would not be the Moon, the sickly thing, 60

LEAVE me alone ! my tears would make you laugh, 205
Let weaker souls at His decree repine, 97
Life of my learning, fire of all my Art, 120
Little Theo's gone away, 150
" Little tongue of red-brown flame," 41
Lord of the winds, I cry to Thee, 149
Love is a *Rome*, and many roads there be, 93
Love, the immortal thing, by Time constrained, 175
Love went a-riding over the earth, 114
Love, whereof purest light the shadow is, 209
Low-flying swallow, tho' the sky be fair, 158
Lo, when the house is empty come the dead, 107

MANY a flower have I seen blossom, 152

" Merciful Christ, from Thee it was not hid," 37
Mother of God ! no lady thou, 30
My Queen her sceptre did lay down, 13
Mysterious Earth ! mother of trees and flowers, 145

NIGHT is fallen within, without, 82
No longer live, 131
No more alone sleeping, no more alone waking, 57
No nearer to thy presence let me stand, 170
None ever was in love with me but grief, 185
Not as I am thou art—and yet thou art, 209
Now every day the bracken browner grows, 112
Now the sky is inky black, 145

O, A gallant set were they, 45
O casket of sweet sounds, wherein there lieth, 58
O Darkness gather round, 131
O Earth, my mother ! not upon thy breast, 113
O grant me darkness ! Let no gleam, 162
O let me be in loving nice, 165
O mighty Spirit, whither art thou fled, 123
O mortal virtue and immortal sin, 89
On a day, and on a day, 117
On alien ground, breathing an alien air, 109
One day in every year, 119
One night, as dreaming on my bed I lay, 5
Only a little shall we speak of thee, 210
Only for thee I fly the joyful sun, 197
O, not for that they ought, 75
O, one I need to love me, 114
Open your gates, ye skies, and let the host, 51
O tell me not that years will give, 130

O that we need not suffer, 210
O the high valley, the little low hill, 137
Other men may never care, 81
Others may praise thee, Sleep ; so will not I, 179
O thou slight word, most like to *breath*, and made, 83
O voice that ever wanderest o'er the earth, 132

PLANT not the lily here ! 46
Pour me red wine from out the Venice flask, 36
Prisoned within these walls, 56

"REMEMBER not !" I say to Him whose face, 123

SAY that I lived a life of sun and storm, 178
Shall I be good ? 92
She sleeps so lightly, that in trembling fear, 175
She sought the stars, she told me I must die, 181
Since Isaac in the fields at eventide, 172
Some hang above the tombs, 143
Some in a child would live, some in a book ; 214
Some showed me Life as 'twere a royal game, 157
Speak to the Wind and bid him stay, 141
Spring and the flowers return. The world is gay, 66
Stay, stay my heart, what is it thou dost feel ? 177
Strange Power, I know not what thou art, 1
" Strangers are we and pilgrims here !" 95
Strike, Life, a happy hour, and let me live, 138
Sunshine let it be or frost, 172
Sweetest wishes didst thou send, 164

THAT this should be the common grief of all, 208
The blossoming of love I sang, 19
The branch breaks because it is weak, 148

The clock, 127
 The clouds before him rushed, as they, 69
 The clouds had made a crimson crown, 4
 The Devil is dead, good people all, 32
 Thee have I sought, divine Humility, 115
 The earth that made the rose, 91
 The faded perfume of forgotten years, 202
 The fire, the lamp, and I, were alone together, 99
 The flowers of the field were sun and dew, 104
 The great rain is over, 144
 The grief of age is not the grief of youth, 14
 The lake lay blue below the hill, 52
 The men and women round thee, what are they, 105
 The murmur of the city sounded on, 48
 "The myrtle bush grew shady," 52
 The poet's heart without his gift of song, 204
 There came a man across the moor, 18
 Therefore I wrote it, not that men should buy—, 212
 There in that other world, what waits for me, 187
 There's no smoke in the chimney, 186
 There was a wood, a witches' wood, 61
 There was not a moon, but half a moon, 42
 There with two lives before me did I choose, 130
 The sense of fellowship is grown, 98
 The song of nightingales, 132
 The sum of loss I have not reckoned yet, 154
 The sun is not the sun, but very Light, 86
 The wailing wind doth not enough despair, 55
 The weapon that you fought with was a word, 31
 The wind and the sea are sisters, 182
 They fed me with poisonous food of praise, 192
 "They served with Nelson, and with Nelson died," 130

Thou art the sun, and the wind, and the driving shower,
 78
 Thou show'st thy beauty unto all the men, 98
 Thou that canst sit in silence hour by hour, 118
 Three years ! Is it only three, 14
 Through the sunny garden, 137
 Thus did a nameless and immortal hand, 59
 Thy blessings are an armed band, 54
 Thy body is no more thy house, 20
 Thy hand in mine, thy hand in mine, 183
 Thy little destiny, 150
 Time brought me many another friend, 28
 Tired of the daily round, 206
 'Tis not Love that is dead, 86
 To me realities but seem, 178
 True to myself am I, and false to all, 26
 Turn in, my lord, turn in, she said, 134
 Two differing sorrows made these eyes grow dim, 173
 Two forms of darkness are there. One is Night, 40

 We are not near enough to love, 121
 Weary was I of toil and strife, 124
 Well of blackness, all defiling, 135
 We were not made for refuges of lies, 127
 We were young, we were merry, we were very very
 wise, 63
 What vision of the softly sleeping eyes, 56
 When I am dead, I know that thou wilt weep, 180
 When Mary thro' the garden went, 67
 When my dead went home to my dead, 184
 When my love did what I would not, what I would not,

When the Golden Apples shook, 72
When wintry winds are no more heard, 7
"Where are you going, Master mine?" 70
Where dwell the lovely, wild white women folk, 76
Where the gray bushes by the gray sea grow, 159
Where, to me, is the loss, 129
Where were you, Baby, 176
Whether I live, or whether I die, 118
While the sun was going down, 24
"Who is he?" asked the seekers of the dead, 201
Who was this that came by the way, 163
Why is she set so far, so far above me, 194
Wind and waters ring the bells, 102
With slow and stealthy steps he trod, 155
Words, dear companions! In my curtained cot, 212

You thought I had the strength of men, 191

POEMS

I

TO MEMORY

STRANGE Power, I know not what thou art,
Murderer or mistress of my heart.
I know I'd rather meet the blow
Of my most unrelenting foe
Than live—as now I live—to be
Slain twenty times a day by thee.

Yet, when I would command thee hence,
Thou mockest at the vain pretence,
Murmuring in mine ear a song
Once loved, alas ! forgotten long ;
And on my brow I feel a kiss
That I would rather die than miss.

II

LARGHETTO

GRANT me but a day, love,
But a day,
Ere I give my heart,
My heart away,
Ere I say the word
I'll ne'er unsay.

Is it earnest with me?
Is it play?
Did the world in arms
Cry to me, "Stay!"
Not a moment then
Would I delay.

Yet, for very love,
I say thee nay.
Ere I give my heart,
My heart away,
Grant me but a day, love,
But a day !

III

SLOWLY

HEAVY is my heart,
Dark are thine eyes.
Thou and I must part
Ere the sun rise.

Ere the sun rise
Thou and I must part.
Dark are thine eyes,
Heavy my heart.

IV
GONE

ABOUT the little chambers of my heart
Friends have been coming—going—many a
year.

The doors stand open there.
Some, lightly stepping, enter ; some depart.
Freely they come and freely go, at will.
The walls give back their laughter ; all day
long

They fill the house with song.
One door alone is shut, one chamber still.

V
A MOMENT

THE clouds had made a crimson crown
Above the mountains high.
The stormy sun was going down
In a stormy sky.

Why did you let your eyes so rest on me,
And hold your breath between?
In all the ages this can never be
As if it had not been.

VI

“THERE WAS NO PLACE FOUND”

ONE night, as dreaming on my bed I lay,
I saw the whole world die and pass away.

Young men and old, true lover and fair maid
Passed, in an endless passing, unafraid.

And as they went, each to his radiant home,
They hailed me after, calling to me, “Come!”

Some sought a land of living light, where none
Remembers more the shining of the sun.

Some sought a land of living light, and there
Longed for the dark, to hide their bright despair.

At last I lay upon the ground alone.
No voice ; the empty silence cried, “ Begone ! ”

Then I arose and turned about to flee.
On either hand there was no place for me.

The shining ones said sadly, “ All too late !
None enter Heaven but through the narrow
gate.”

The fiery ones said sadly, “ All too fast !
There is no need of Hell, while Earth shall last.”

VII

MORNING DREAMS

I ASKED of Night, that she would take me
Where I could not go by day.
I asked of Day, he should not wake me
Ere the sun was on his way ;

For as the sun steals from the flowers
The crystal dew by which they live,
He kills the memory of those hours
Which Night, for my delight, will give.

VIII

COME HOME !

WHEN wintry winds are no more heard,
And joy's in every bosom,
When summer sings in every bird,
And shines in every blossom,
When happy twilight hours are long,
Come home, my love, and think no wrong !

When berries gleam above the stream
And half the fields are yellow,
Come back to me, my joyous dream,
The world hath not thy fellow !
And I will make thee Queen among
The Queens of summer and of song.

IX

THE OTHER SIDE OF A MIRROR

I SAT before my glass one day,
And conjured up a vision bare,
Unlike the aspects glad and gay,
That erst were found reflected there—
The vision of a woman, wild
With more than womanly despair.

Her hair stood back on either side
A face bereft of loveliness.
It had no envy now to hide
What once no man on earth could guess.
It formed the thorny aureole
Of hard unsanctified distress.

Her lips were open— not a sound
Came through the parted lines of red.
Whate'er it was, the hideous wound
In silence and in secret bled.
No sigh relieved her speechless woe,
She had no voice to speak her dread.

And in her lurid eyes there shone
The dying flame of life's desire,
Made mad because its hope was gone,
And kindled at the leaping fire
Of jealousy, and fierce revenge,
And strength that could not change nor tire.

Shade of a shadow in the glass,
O set the crystal surface free !
Pass—as the fairer visions pass—
Nor ever more return, to be
The ghost of a distracted hour,
That heard me whisper, " I am she ! "

X

A DIFFERENCE

"First" in my heart? Why, she is all my heart.

There is no other ;

Tho' I in her esteem have but a part,

And many a brother.

"First" in my love? I have no other love

Nor recollection.

Yet many names are writ my name above

In her affection.

"First" in my life? Tell me that she must die—

My life is over !

Tell her that I am dead—she'll give a sigh

For her old lover.

XI

I HAVE forged me in sevenfold heats
A shield from foes and lovers,
And no one knows the heart that beats
Beneath the shield that covers.

XII

“EVERY MAN FOR HIS OWN HAND”

I MAY not call what many call divine,
And yet my faith is faith in its degree ;
I worship at a dim and lonely shrine
On bended knee.

The secret grace of faith's celestial part
I hoard up safely for mine own self's own ;
Within the hidden chambers of the heart
I love alone.

XIII
IN THE BRERA

FULL many a painter in the early days
Dreamt that he saw the Lord, and dreaming,
smiled.

Yet saw he nothing save a little child,
The baby angels round him singing praise ;
Nothing he saw except the heavenward gaze,
The pure compassion of the undefiled :
Or else a man of sorrows, patient, mild,
His thoughts our thoughts, his ways our human
ways.

Thou only, Leonardo, didst behold
That which their eyes, desiring, sought in vain ;
And if—since thou wert cast in mortal mould—
Not all thy hand might do was free from stain,
All that was not immortal, making old,
Time painted out, and left the vision plain.

XIV

REGINA

My Queen her sceptre did lay down,
She took from her head the golden crown
Worn by right of her royal birth.
Her purple robe she cast aside,
And the scarlet vestures of her pride,
That was the pride of the earth.
In her nakedness was she
Queen of the world, herself and me.

My Queen took up her sceptre bright,
Her crown more radiant than the light,
The rubies gleaming out of the gold.
She donned her robe of purple rare,
And did a deed that none may dare,
That makes the blood run cold.
And in her bravery is she
Queen of herself, the world and me.

XV

AT FIRST

THE grief of age is not the grief of youth ;
A child is still a child, even in his grieving.
Yet his first sorrow is, in very truth,
 Dark, past believing.

When first he wanders forth in early spring,
Nor heeds among the flowers each gay new-
 comer,
When first he hates the happy birds that sing,
 The sun that shines in summer.

XVI

AN ANNIVERSARY

THREE years ! Is it only three ?
A weary while has passed since then.
The world of nature and of men
Is older, by an age, to me.

Three years ! And is it then so long ?
I thought it happened yesterday.
How is it with thee, far away,
In the white world of palm and song ?

XVII

“OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY”

ALL around was dumb and still,
Dumb and still as any stone.
We went together over the hill,
But I came back alone.

All around was gray and dun,
Gray and dun by sea and shore.
When twilight fell, my love saw one,
Where she saw two before.

All around was barren ground,
Barren ground lay far and near.
I left him with a gaping wound,
And what had I to fear ?

When she asks me what befell,
What befell on Lady Day,
I, her lord, that love her well,
Whisper in her ear and say—

“ All around was dumb and still,
Dumb and still as any stone.
We went together over the hill,
But I came back alone.”

XVIII

EYES

EYES, what are they? Coloured glass,
Where reflections come and pass.

Open windows—by them sit
Beauty, Learning, Love, and Wit.

Searching cross-examiners ;
Comfort's holy ministers.

Starry silences of soul,
Music past the lips' control.

Fountains of unearthly light ;
Prisons of the infinite.

XIX

GIFTS

I TOSSED my friend a wreath of roses, wet
With early dew, the garland of the morn.
He lifted it—and on his brow he set
A crackling crown of thorn.

Against my foe I hurled a murderous dart.
He caught it in his hand—I heard him laugh—
I saw the thing that should have pierced his heart
Turn to a golden staff.

XX

MASTER AND GUEST

THERE came a man across the moor,
Fell and foul of face was he.

He left the path by the cross-roads three,
And stood in the shadow of the door.

I asked him in to bed and board.

I never hated any man so.

He said he could not say me No.
He sat in the seat of my own dear lord.

“Now sit you by my side !” he said,

“Else may I neither eat nor drink.

You would not have me starve, I think.”
He ate the offerings of the dead.

“I’ll light you to your bed,” quoth I.

“My bed is yours—but light the way !”

I might not turn aside nor stay ;
I showed him where we twain did lie.

The cock was trumpeting the morn.

He said : " Sweet love, a long farewell !

You have kissed a citizen of Hell,

And a soul was doomed when you were born.

" Mourn, mourn no longer for your dear !

Him may you never meet above.

The gifts that Love hath given to Love,

Love gives away again to Fear."

XXI

TWO SONGS

THE blossoming of love I sang.

The streams adown the mountain sprang,

And all the world with music rang.

A cloud has darkened Heaven above,

I only hear a moaning dove.

I sing the withering of love.

XXII

HORROR

THY body is no more thy house,
It is become thy sepulchre.
I cannot any more arouse
The spirit that did inhabit there.

The brain's asleep before its time.
I would that thou hadst died outright,
And I had seen thee, in thy prime,
Go half to darkness, half to light !

XXIII

“HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN, AND HIS
OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT”

As Christ the Lord was passing by,
He came, one night, to a cottage door.
He came, a poor man, to the poor ;
He had no bed whereon to lie.

He asked in vain for a crust of bread,
 Standing there in the frozen blast.
The door was locked and bolted fast.
“Only a beggar!” the poor man said.

Christ the Lord went further on,
 Until He came to a palace gate.
There a king was keeping his state.
In every window the candles shone.

The king beheld Him out in the cold.
 He left his guests in the banquet-hall.
He bade his servants tend them all.
“I wait on a Guest I know of old.”

“’Tis only a beggar-man!” they said.
 “Yes,” he said; “it is Christ the Lord.”
He spoke to Him a kindly word,
He gave Him wine and he gave Him bread.

Now Christ is Lord of Heaven and Hell,
And all the words of Christ are true.
He touched the cottage, and it grew ;
He touched the palace, and it fell.

The poor man is become a king.
Never was man so sad as he.
Sorrow and Sin on the throne make three,
He has no joy in mortal thing.

But the sun streams in at the cottage door
That stands where once the palace stood,
And the workman, toiling to earn his food,
Was never a king before.

XXIV

ONE AND ALL

"GOD comfort all who mourn !" I said,
And I was thinking but of one.
O, many another mourns his dead,
For many a man his life is done !
And I was thinking but of one.

I dare not say, " God comfort him !"
'Tis not for me such words to say.
Fast prisoned in my cloister dim,
For Man and not for men I pray.
But O, " God comfort all !" I say.

XXV

MORTAL COMBAT

IT is because you were my friend,
I fought you as the devil fights.

Whatever fortune God may send,
For once I set the world to rights.

And that was when I thrust you down,
And stabbed you twice and twice again,
Because you dared take off your crown,
And be a man like other men.

XXVI

ST. ANDREW'S

WHILE the sun was going down,
There arose a fairy town.

Not the town I saw by day,
Cheerless, joyless, dull, and gray

But a far, fantastic place,
Builded with ethereal grace,

Shimmering in a tender mist
That the slanting rays had kissed

Ere they let their latest fire
Touch with gold each slender spire.

There no men and women be :
Mermen, maidens of the sea,

Combing out their tangled locks,
Sit and sing among the rocks.

As their ruddy harps they sound,
With the seaweed twisted round,

In the shining sand below
See the city downward go !

XXVII

WINGED WORDS

As darting swallows skim across a pool,
Whose tranquil depths reflect a tranquil sky,
So, o'er the depths of silence, dark and cool,
Our winged words dart playfully,
And seldom break
The quiet surface of the lake,
As they flit by.

XXVIII

*"To thine own self be true ;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."*

TRUE to myself am I, and false to all.
Fear, sorrow, love, constrain us till we die.
But when the lips betray the spirit's cry,
The will, that should be sovereign, is a thrall.

Therefore let terror slay me, ere I call
For aid of men. Let grief begrudge a sigh.
“Are you afraid?”—“unhappy?” “No!”
The lie
About the shrinking truth stands like a wall.
‘And have you loved?’ “No, never!” All
the while,
The heart within my flesh is turned to stone.
Yea, none the less that I account it vile,
The heart within my heart makes speechless
moan,
And when they see one face, one face alone,
The stern eyes of the soul are moved to smile.

XXIX

GO !

Go at the deepest, darkest dead of night,
When no foot shall be stirring save thine own,
Go forth, unlighted, to his couch, alone,
And break his slumber with thy kisses light.

Go, while the deeds and characters of day
Are but as dreams and fleeting visions vain.
Go, take him to thy beating heart again,
Ere all the world awake and find the way !

XXX

NOT YET

TIME brought me many another friend
That loved me longer.
New love was kind, but in the end
Old love was stronger.

Years come and go. No New Year yet
Hath slain December.
And all that should have cried—"Forget !"
Cries but—"Remember !"

XXXI

BLUE AND WHITE

BLUE is Our Lady's colour,
White is Our Lord's.
To-morrow I will wear a knot
Of blue and white cords,
That you may see it, where you ride
Among the flashing swords.

.

O banner, white and sunny blue,
With prayer I wove thee !
For love the white, for faith the heavenly
hue,
And both for him, so tender-true,
Him that doth love me !

XXXII

OUR LADY

MOTHER of God ! no lady thou :

Common woman of common earth !

OUR LADY ladies call thee now,

But Christ was never of gentle birth ;

A common man of the common earth.

For God's ways are not as our ways.

The noblest lady in the land

Would have given up half her days,

Would have cut off her right hand,

To bear the Child that was God of the land.

Never a lady did He choose,

Only a maid of low degree,

So humble she might not refuse

The carpenter of Galilee.

A daughter of the people, she.

Out she sang the song of her heart.

Never a lady so had sung.

She knew no letters, had no art ;

To all mankind, in woman's tongue,

Hath Israelitish Mary sung.

And still for men to come she sings,

Nor shall her singing pass away.

"He hath filled the hungry with good things"—

Oh, listen, lords and ladies gay !—

"And the rich He hath sent empty away."

XXXIII

“HE KNOWETH NOT THAT THE
DEAD ARE THINE”

THE weapon that you fought with was a word,
And with that word you stabbed me to the heart.

Not once but twice you did it, for the sword

Made no blood start.

They have not tried you for your life. You go
Strong in such innocence as men will boast.
They have not buried me. They do not know
Life from its ghost.

XXXIV

THE DEVIL'S FUNERAL

THE Devil is dead, good people all !
Who are the bearers that bear the pall ?
One of them thinks he has slain God too,
With the self-same sword that Satan slew.
One of them thinks he has saved God's life ;
The Devil was ever the God of strife.
A purple pall above him spread !
A king it is that is lying dead.
The worst of kings never ruled so well
As this magnificent King of Hell.

What is the guerdon of all his pains ?

He is dead himself, but Hell remains.

He forged his coffin before he died.

'Twas made of gold that was seven times tried :

The glittering golden words of those,

Who counted themselves his chiefest foes.

Where will you bury him ? Not on earth !

In poison flowers he would come to birth.

We will not cast him into the sea.

The winds and the waves would set him free.

Lay him out straight on the funeral pyre !

All his life he has lived in fire.

And lo ! as the crackling flame burns bright,

Satan transformed to an angel of light,

That he may work more utter woe

Than ever he worked when he dwelt below.

XXXV

ARMIDA'S GARDEN

I HAVE been there before thee, O my love !

Each winding way I know and all the flowers
The shadowy cypress trees, the twilight grove,
Where rest, in fragrant sleep, the enchanted
hours.

I have been there before thee. At the end

There stands a gate through which thou too
must pass.

When thou shalt reach it, God in mercy send

Thou say no bitterer word, love, than "Alas !"

XXXVI

CONFIDENCE

EVEN to one I dare not tell
Where lies my Heaven, where lies my Hell ;
But to the world will I confide
What's hid from all the world beside.

XXXVII

BURIAL

How, was it I—I that unmoved
 Stood tearless in the funeral train,
When it was you, you that I loved,
 Whose earth was given to earth again?

The highest heavens are holy ground,
 The song of birds—the dawn—the gloom.
In every perfect sight and sound
 I bow, fair love, before thy tomb.

XXXVIII

MANDRAGORA

POUR me red wine from out the Venice flask,
Pour faster, faster yet !
The joy of ruby thought I do not ask,
Bid me forget !

Breathe slumbrous music round me, sweet and
slow,
To honied phrases set !
Into the land of dreams I long to go.
Bid me forget !

Lay not the rose's bloom against my cheek,
With chill tears she is wet.
The wrinkled poppy is the flower I seek.
Bid me forget !

Where is delight? and what are pleasures now?—

Moths that a garment fret.

The world is turned memorial, crying, “Thou

Shalt not forget !”

XXXIX

For a Picture by Burne Jones, called—

“THE MERCIFUL KNIGHT”

The Knight is kneeling before a large Crucifix. His enemy, riding away, looks back at him.

“MERCIFUL Christ, from Thee it was not hid,
Merciful Christ, Who saw'st what this man
did,

This man in Thine own image—Christ forbid!

“In Thine own image? Nay! this image here
Hath more of Thee . . . I never yet knew
fear;

I tremble lest that soul to Thee be dear!

“Yet, an Thou lov’st all souls, Thou lovest this.
Thy life Thou gav’st, that it might live in
 bliss,
Although it should betray Thee with a kiss.

“How oft shall I forgive? Seventy times
 seven?

I had rather have lost my life here than for-
 given.

I had rather have lost my life there, in Thy
 Heaven.

“My heart is stone and doubts. Hast Thou a
 heart?

See, I forgive!—With Thee I have no part.

A painted corpse—a thing of wood Thou
 art!”

Thereat he saw no more a thing of wood.

Thereat Christ came into the Holy Rood.

Thereat he knelt, and knew that Christ made
 good.

The foe, whose hatred love could never tire,
Looked on a sudden back, with fierce desire,
And felt forgiveness burn like coals of fire.

XL

INVOCATION

COME, long-awaited dawn of wondrous Night,
Come, heart's delight !
The Moon hath risen, the Sun of lovers' eyes ;
The stars are fainting now, the pale moth flies ;
The air is still, the bird of darkness cries.

Spirits of Sleep, beware, and come not near !
Tremble and fear !

When with excess of life the senses numb
Call to the lips of Love, and they be dumb,
Then, to restore defeated nature, come !

XLI

DOUBT

Two forms of darkness are there. One is Night,
When I have been an animal, and feared
I knew not what, and lost my soul, nor dared
Feel aught save hungry longing for the light.
And one is Blindness. Absolute and bright,
The Sun's rays smote me till they masked the
 Sun ;
The Light itself was by the light undone ;
The day was filled with terrors and affright.

Then did I weep, compassionate of those
Who see no friend in God—in Satan's host no
 foes.

XLII

ON THE HEARTHTRUG

“LITTLE tongue of red-brown flame,
Whither go you ?”—“Whence I came ;
Sending on a courier spark
To explore the chimney dark.

“Once I was a sunbeam fair,
Darting through the awakened air.
Quickly to a green leaf gone,
On a forest tree I shone.

“Steely lightning struck the bough,
And I sank into a slough.
Many ages there I lay,
Ere I saw the All-Father, Day.

“Now I sparkle once again,
Flashing light and warmth to men,
Ere, like all things that are bright,
I rejoin the All-Mother, Night.”

XLIII

AT DEAD OF NIGHT

THERE was not a moon but half a moon,
And the stars were faint and few.
There were clouds full soon at the night's high
noon,
And a rollicking wind that blew.

There were three that bled, there was one that
led,
Where they fought with four and three.
The silvery swords were crimson red,
And the grass was a sight to see.

They laughed as they fell, and they died right
well,
And they called to their foes for more.
“ We will go to Hell, but the tale we'll tell
Of the seven that fought with four ! ”

XLIV

SONG

WHEN my love did what I would not, what I
would not,

I could hear his merry voice upon the wind,
Crying, "Fairest, shut your eyes, for see you
should not.

Love is blind ! "

When my love said what I say not, what I say not,

With a joyous laugh he quieted my fears,
Whispering, "Fairest, hearken not, for hear
you may not.

Hath Love ears ? "

When my love said, "Will you longer let me
seek it ?

Blind and deaf is she that doth not bid me
come ! "

All my heart said murmuring, "Dearest, can I
speak it ?

Love is dumb !

XLV

THE WITCH

I HAVE walked a great while over the snow,
And I am not tall nor strong.
My clothes are wet, and my teeth are set,
And the way was hard and long.
I have wandered over the fruitful earth,
But I never came here before.
Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at
the door !

The cutting wind is a cruel foe.
I dare not stand in the blast.
My hands are stone, and my voice a groan,
And the worst of death is past.
I am but a little maiden still,
My little white feet are sore.
Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at
the door !

Her voice was the voice that women have,
Who plead for their heart's desire.
She came—she came—and the quivering flame
Sank and died in the fire.
It never was lit again on my hearth
Since I hurried across the floor,
To lift her over the threshold, and let her in at
the door.

XLVI

A HUGUENOT

O, a gallant set were they,
As they charged on us that day,
A thousand riding like one !
Their trumpets crying,
And their white plumes flying,
And their sabres flashing in the sun.

O, a sorry lot were we,
As we stood beside the sea,

Each man for himself as he stood !
We were scattered and lonely—
A little force only
Of the good men fighting for the good.

But I never loved more
On sea or on shore
The ringing of my own true blade.
Like lightning it quivered,
And the hard helms shivered,
As I sang, "None maketh me afraid !"

XLVII

ELEANOR

PLANT not the lily here !
No lily lies below.
The crimson rose to her was dear,
And the summer of the year,
Not the snow.

Sing no lament !
She loved a merry song.
For her the birds were sent.
To her the humming of the golden bees,
And the murmur of trees
Shall belong.

XLVIII

SELF-QUESTION

Is this wide world not large enough to fill thee,
Nor Nature, nor that deep man's Nature,
Art ?
Are they too thin, too weak and poor to still
thee,
Thou little heart ?
Dust art thou, and to dust again returnest,
A spark of fire within a beating clod.
Should that be infinite for which thou burnest ?
Must it be God ?

XLIX

A DAY-DREAM

THE mumur of the city sounded on
Below the plaintive murmur of a hymn
That Sabbath day ; the edge of life was gone,
A veil of smoke made all the houses dim.
My eyes forgot to see--and lo, they saw
A sight that filled my shaken soul with awe !

For I was in the land where all lay clear
Betwixt the sunshine and the shining sand.
And nothing far there was and nothing near—
You might have touched the mountains with
your hand—
And yet I looked upon them o'er a plain
Vast as the vastness of the untravelled main.

Tall rows of pillars—stems of flowering stone
 Sprang up around me in their ordered growth.
Here sat a maid, and there an ancient crone—
 The straight, bright shafts of light illumined
 both.
No shadow was there and no sound—the hum
Of brooding silence kept the temple dumb.

Three tombs of Kings, each with his corners
 three,
 Shut out three spaces of the golden sky.
Clear, flat, and bright, they hid no mystery,
 But painted mummies, of a scarlet dye,
That lay embalmed there many a long term,
Safe from unkindly damp and creeping worm.

Deep set beneath a sibyl's wrinkled brow,
 The ancient woman's eyes were full of song.
They held the voice of Time ; and even now
 I mind me how the burden rolled along ;

For I forgot the music of the birds,
And music's self, and music knit to words.

Then did I turn me to the maiden's eyes,
And they were as the sea, brimming and
deep.

Within them lay the secret of the skies,
The rhythmical tranquillity of sleep.
They were more quiet than a windless calm
Among the isles of spices and of balm.

Now music is an echo in mine ear,
And common stillness but the lack of noise ;
For the true music I shall never hear,
Nor the true silence, mother of all joys.
They dwell apart on that enchanted ground
Where not a shadow falls and not a sound.

L

I ASK of thee, love, nothing but relief.

Thou canst not bring the old days back
again ;

For I was happy then,
Not knowing heavenly joy, not knowing grief.

LI

SUN AND STORM

OPEN your gates, ye skies, and let the host
Of gathered waters fall, and drown the earth !
Your hour of utmost terror is the ghost
Of that when Grief had birth.

The all-resplendent Spring, the pomp of May,
Through white and golden flowers the virgin
light,
Are but a thin gray shadow of the day
When Joy was at her height.

LII

L'OISEAU BLEU

THE lake lay blue below the hill.

O'er it, as I looked, there flew
Across the waters, cold and still,
A bird whose wings were palest blue.

The sky above was blue at last,

The sky beneath me blue in blue.
A moment, ere the bird had passed,
It caught his image as he flew.

LIII

JEALOUSY

"THE myrtle bush grew shady
Down by the ford."—

"Is it even so?" said my lady.

"Even so!" said my lord.

"The leaves are set too thick together
For the point of a sword."

“ The arras in your room hangs close,
No light between !
You wedded one of those
That see unseen.”—
“ Is it even so ? ” said the King’s Majesty.
“ Even so ! ” said the Queen.

LIV

SHADOW

CHILD of my love ! though thou be bright as day,
Though all the sons of joy laugh and adore
thee,
Thou canst not throw thy shadow self away.
Where thou dost come, the earth is darker
for thee.

When thou dost pass, a flower that saw the sun
Sees him no longer.
The hosts of darkness are, thou radiant one,
Through thee made stronger !

LV

PROSPERITY

THY blessings are an armèd band.

With a javelin and a dart,

With a spear to wound the heart

Round about they stand.

Soul, in honour glorified,

Be thou ware of deadly sin !

Cruelty's the javelin,

The spear is pride.

LVI

NEWS

ASK me not how it came,

If I sought it !

My very thoughts are flame

Since first I thought it.

I saw it not with eyes.
It was not spoken.
These mysteries
Have neither sign nor token.

Ah ! say not, " Is it true ? "
In faith uphold me !
I know not how I knew.
My heart told me.

LVII

AWAKE

THE wailing wind doth not enough despair ;
The Sea, for all her sobbing, hath the Moon,
I cannot find my heart's cry anywhere,
Fain to complain alone.

The whistle of the train that, like a dart,
Pierces the darkness as it hurries by,
Hath not enough of sadness, and my heart
Is stifled for a cry.

LVIII

S O N G

PRISONED within these walls,
I think of you.
Lightly the snowflake falls,
The rain too.

Now it is rain, and now
The snow again.
Within—I know not how—
'Tis only rain.

LIX

FAIR AS A DREAM!

WHAT vision of the softly sleeping eyes
Shone like the vision that they could not see?
Night, quivering with the children of the skies
Resplendently.

Fair is her dream. But ah ! what fairest dream
Is half so lovely as the dawn of day,
When the first golden gleam
Chases the rose and dove colour away ?

LX

MARRIAGE

No more alone sleeping, no more alone waking,
Thy dreams divided, thy prayers in twain ;
Thy merry sisters to-night forsaking,
Never shall we see thee, maiden, again.

Never shall we see thee, thine eyes glancing,
Flashing with laughter and wild in glee,
Under the mistletoe kissing and dancing,
Wantonly free.

There shall come a matron walking sedately,
Low-voiced, gentle, wise in reply.
Tell me, O tell me, can I love her greatly ?
All for her sake must the maiden die !

LXI

TO A PIANO

O CASKET of sweet sounds, wherein there lieth
A sound to lull the weary man to sleep,
A sound to make the hard and tearless weep,
A sound that every sound on earth defieth,
And only to one hand on earth replieth,
What time her fingers varied measure keep,
To drag it wooingly from out the deep
That, softly wooed by others, only sigheth !
If I might win me that remembered strain
By reverent lifting of thy gleamy lid,
I could forget the sorrowful refrain
Of all the world shall do—is doing—did.
Pandora's prisoned hope was not more vain.
The casket's there, the melody is hid.

LXII

ON A BAS-RELIEF OF PELOPS AND
HIPPODAMEIA

Which was wrecked and lay many years under the sea.

THUS did a nameless and immortal hand
 Make of rough stone, the thing least like to
 life,
 The husband and the wife
That the Most High, ere His creation, planned.
Hundreds of years they lay, unsunned, un-
 scanned,
 Where the waves cut more smoothly than the
 knife,
 What time the winds tossed them about in
 strife,
And filled those lips and eyes with the soft sand.

Art, that from Nature stole the human form
 By slow device of brain, by simple strength,
Lent it to Nature's artless force to keep.

So with the human sculptor wrought the storm
To round those lines of beauty, till at length
A perfect thing was rescued from the deep.

LXIII

IN DISPRAISE OF THE MOON

I WOULD not be the Moon, the sickly thing,
To summon owls and bats upon the wing ;
For when the noble Sun is gone away,
She turns his night into a pallid day.

She hath no air, no radiance of her own,
That world unmusical of earth and stone.
She wakes her dim, uncoloured, voiceless hosts,
Ghost of the Sun, herself the sun of ghosts.

The mortal eyes that gaze too long on her
Of Reason's piercing ray defrauded are.
Light in itself doth feed the living brain ;
That light, reflected, but makes darkness plain.

LXIV

THE WITCHES' WOOD

THERE was a wood, a witches' wood,
All the trees therein were pale.
They bore no branches green and good,
But as it were a gray nun's veil.

They talked and chattered in the wind
From morning dawn to set of sun,
Like men and women that have sinned,
Whose thousand evil tongues are one.

Their roots were like the hands of men,
Grown hard and brown with clutching gold.
Their foliage women's tresses when
The hair is withered, thin, and old.

There never did a sweet bird sing
For happy love about his nest.
The clustered bats on evil wing
Each hollow trunk and bough possessed.

And in the midst a pool there lay
Of water white, as tho' a scare
Had frightened off the eye of day
And kept the Moon reflected there.

LXV

WILDERSPIN

IN the little red house by the river,
When the short night fell,
Beside his web sat the weaver,
Weaving a twisted spell.
Mary and the Saints deliver
My soul from the nethermost Hell !

IN the little red house by the rushes
It grew not dark at all,
For day dawned over the bushes
Before the night could fall.
Where now a torrent rushes,
The brook ran thin and small.

In the little red house a chamber
Was set with jewels fair ;
There did a vine clamber
Along the clambering stair,
And grapes that shone like amber
Hung at the windows there.

Will the loom not cease whirring ?
Will the house never be still ?
Is never a horseman stirring
Out and about on the hill ?
Was it the cat purring ?
Did some one knock at the sill ?

To the little red house a rider
Was bound to come that night.
A cup of sheeny cider
Stood ready for his delight.
And like a great black spider,
The weaver watched on the right.

To the little red house by the river
I came when the short night fell.
I broke the web for ever,
I broke my heart as well.
Michael and the Saints deliver
My soul from the nethermost Hell !

LXVI
UNWELCOME

WE were young, we were merry, we were very
very wise,
And the door stood open at our feast,
When there passed us a woman with the West
in her eyes,
And a man with his back to the East.

O, still grew the hearts that were beating so fast,
The loudest voice was still.
The jest died away on our lips as they passed,
And the rays of July struck chill.

The cups of red wine turned pale on the board,
The white bread black as soot.
The hound forgot the hand of her lord,
She fell down at his foot.

Low let me lie, where the dead dog lies,
Ere I sit me down again at a feast,
When there passes a woman with the West in
her eyes,
And a man with his back to the East.

LXVII

THE LADY OF TREES

By a lake below the mountain
Hangs the birch, as if, in glee,
The lake had flung the moon a fountain,
She had turned it to a tree.

Therefore do her dull leaves glimmer
Like the waves that mothered them.
Therefore flits a moony shimmer
Always round her curvèd stem.

LXVIII

FEBRUARY, 1900

SPRING and the flowers return. The world is
gay,
Once more the old sun on the ancient earth
Shines forth and brings a million buds to birth.
Where are those sons of ours we sent away?
Spring and the flowers return—but where are
they?

Tarry, hard Winter, ice-bound, stiff, and gray,
Thou art as we are, full of darkest fears,
Weep with us—let us feel thy chilly tears!
We are not fit for joy. We can but say,
“Spring and the flowers return—but where are
they?”

LXIX

DUMB

“A VOICE ! A voice !” I cried. No music stills
The craving heart that would an answer find ;
No song of birds, no murmuring of the wind,
No—not that awful harmony of mind,
The silent stars, above the silent hills.

LXX

WHEN MARY THRO' THE GARDEN
WENT

WHEN Mary thro' the garden went,
There was no sound of any bird,
And yet, because the night was spent,
The little grasses lightly stirred,
The flowers awoke, the lilies heard.

When Mary thro' the garden went,
The dew lay still on flower and grass,
The waving palms above her sent
Their fragrance out as she did pass.
No light upon the branches was.

When Mary thro' the garden went,
Her eyes, for weeping long, were dim.
The grass beneath her footsteps bent,
The solemn lilies, white and slim,
These also stood and wept for Him.

When Mary thro' the garden went,
She sought, within the garden ground,
One for Whom her heart was rent,
One Who for her sake was bound,
One Who sought and she was found.

LXXI

HIGH WIND

THE clouds before him rushed, as they
Were racing home to end the day ;
The flying hair of the beeches flew
Out to the East as he went through.

Only the hills unshaken stood.
The lake was tossed into a flood ;
She flung her curling wavelets hoar
In wrath on the distracted shore.

Which of the elements hath sinned ?
What hath angered thee, O wind ?
Thou in all the earth dost see
Nought but it enrageth thee !

LXXII

WHITHER AWAY ?

“ WHERE are you going, Master mine ? ”

“ Mistress of mine, farewell !

Pledge me a cup of golden wine !

Light shall be dark and darkness shine

Before I tell ! ”

“ O go you by the firwoods blue ?

And by the Fairies’ Trysting Tree ? ”

“ No, for the path is grown with rue

And nightshade’s purple fruit, since you

Walked there with me ! ”

“ O go you by the pastures high—

A grassy road and daisies fair ? ”

“ No, for I saw them fade and die

On the bright evening, love, that I

Sat with you there. ”

LXXIII

BEWARE !

HER yellow hair is soft, and her soft eyes
Are as the dove's for meekness. Only feel
The softness of the hand in mine that lies !
The sheath is velvet, but the sword is steel.

Soft are her footsteps ; and her low replies
The lover's woe like softest music heal.
Ah, let him still remember and be wise,
The sheath is velvet, but the sword is steel !

LXXIV

THE KING'S GUARD

*[The King was an Irish King, and shook a bough,
with Golden Apples on it, when he required silence.
A henchman entering his room after the Golden
Apples had sounded, fell down dead.]*

WHEN the Golden Apples shook
In the house of the Irish King,
Never a clerk read from his book,
Never a maid might sing.

The King on his throne sat all alone—
“The ways of the world are lies !
If I hear a whisper near,
He that whispers dies !”

Then one arose : “Our ancient foes
Are galloping hither fast.
He that to the King goes,
That moment is his last.

Come weal or woe, to the King I go,
I am his henchman still.
I will warn him of his ancient foe,
And die an if he will."

Through the silent hall he crept,
Silent as the tomb.
Every footfall as he stepped
Echoed about the room.

The living, they were as the dead,
And as the dead went he.
The frightened eyes of the good and wise
Followed him silently.

He heard, as it had been a roar,
The scuffling feet of a rat.
When he came to the King's door,
He dared not knock thereat.

When he came to the King's throne,
He shook in every limb.
The King on his throne sat all alone
And spake no word to him.

“ Open his eyes ! ” the henchman prayed,
“ Or ever it be too late !
All his men are sore afraid,
And his ancient foe at the gate.”

“ Open his eyes ! ” the King prayed,
“ Or his tongue will scare away
The armed Angels all arrayed,
The Heralds of the day ! ”

The King on his throne sat compassed
round
With the ban and the arrière ban
Of the army that with them is found
Who put no trust in man.

The spirit from the henchman passed,—
Fled to the radiant ring.
His body on the ground was cast,—
But still he guards the King !

LXXV

RENAISSANCE GENTLEMEN

OH, not for that they ought
They fought when they fought,
But they fought for the glory of the fight ;
And they wedded while they wooed,
Ere the fury of their mood
Went out in the blackness of the night.

Oh, boldly led they then
The life of living men,
In their glory, their bravery and pride !
They were cruel and strong
On the right side and the wrong,
And gallantly, gallantly they died.

LXXVI

THE WHITE WOMEN *

WHERE dwell the lovely, wild white women folk,
Mortal to man ?

They never bowed their necks beneath the yoke,
They dwelt alone when the first morning broke
And Time began.

Taller are they than man, and very fair,
Their cheeks are pale,
At sight of them the tiger in his lair,
The falcon hanging in the azure air,
The eagles quail.

The deadly shafts their nervous hands let fly
Are stronger than our strongest—in their form
Larger, more beauteous, carved amazingly,
And when they fight, the wild white women cry
The war-cry of the storm.

* From a legend of Malay, told by Hugh Clifford.

Their words are not as ours. If man might go
Among the waves of Ocean when they
break
And hear them—hear the language of the
snow
Falling on torrents—he might also know
The tongue they speak.

Pure are they as the light ; they never sinned,
But when the rays of the eternal fire
Kindle the West, their tresses they unbind
And fling their girdles to the Western wind,
Swept by desire.

Lo, maidens to the maidens then are born,
Strong children of the maidens and the
breeze,
Dreams are not—in the glory of the morn,
Seen through the gates of ivory and horn—
More fair than these.

And none may find their dwelling. In the shade
Primeval of the forest oaks they hide.
One of our race, lost in an awful glade,
Saw with his human eyes a wild white maid,
And gazing, died.

LXXVII

LINES TO A TREE

THOU art the sun, and the wind, and the driving
shower.
Thou hast worn the snow, and clothed thyself
in her flower :
Lo, there is living in thee the ancient Light !
The sons of the morning sang *Hosanna* at thy
creation.
Old thou art—and young—as an ever-enduring
nation.
Thou art a thousand shapes of the day and a
thousand shapes of the night !

Thou that shadowest ever a bounded circlet of
earth,
Who shall sing thy end that sang thy wonderful
birth ?
Haply the fire that was once thy friend shall
turn to thy foe,
Fall on thee, lightning swift, as the gleam of a
sword and the flash,
Rend thy cherishing bark till it burst in twain
with a crash,
Scorch the leaves of thy crown and lay thee
low !

Solemn sentinel, leaving never thy chosen post,
Haply the waves shall carry thee, wind-blown
and tempest-tost,
No more a nest of the birds, but a home for
wandering men,
Merchants, warriors, mighty captains of them
that roam,

Thou shalt sink, as they sink, to the stillness
under the foam,
Fishes, silent and swift, glide in thy branches
then !

Haply thou shalt be made the sails of a grinding
mill,
Thou shalt rejoice in the sun and the wind be
thy playfellow still,
Whirling and whirling to change into bread the
golden corn !
Haply of thee shall be made at the last a quiver-
ing flame ;
That shall return in light, in the glory of light
that came,
Fire shall befriend thee yet, O marvellous child
of the morn !

LXXVIII

OTHER men may never care
What thy thoughts, thy instincts were,
Care not thou ;
Wear the poet's halo bright,
Long years hence in their despite,
On thy brow.

Narrow not thy walk to keep
Pace with those who, half asleep,
Judge thee now ;
Gain the goal and thou shalt hear
Mighty voices in thine ear,
"Blest art thou."

Not the many, not the few
Keep thou ever in thy view,
Steadfast now,
Only this one thing fulfil,
Thine own heart's tremendous will.
Ay, but how?

LXXIX

NIGHT is fallen within, without,
Come, Love, soon !
I am weary of my doubt.
The golden fire of the Sun is out,
The silver fire of the Moon.

Love shall be
A child in me
When they are cinders gray,
With the earth and with the sea,
With the star that shines on thee,
And the night and day.

LXXX

I SAW a stable, low and very bare,
A little child in a manger.
The oxen knew Him, had Him in their care,
To men He was a stranger.
The safety of the world was lying there,
And the world's danger.

LXXXI

D E A T H

i

O THOU slight word, most like to *breath*, and
made
Of a few letters merely, what's in thee,
Terror of flesh, the spirit's ecstasy,
Mysterious, voiceless, shadow of a shade?

They that fear nothing else, of thee afraid,
Do call thee *Sleep* and *Passing*. Thou set'st
free

Infinite shapes of all a man may be,
Yet at thy nothingness he shrinks dismayed.
If thou wert not, the Poets had been dumb,
And Music silent. Yea, majestic Art
Had never sought and found her better part
Nor by the living eyes betrayed the heart.
Great prophecy were an unmeaning hum,
What-is no longer holding what's-to-come.

ii

I have wept for those who on this turning earth
Had lived more years than I—who were to me
The aim and goal of my felicity,
The dear reward of effort, crown of worth.
And I have wept for babes who died at birth,
Most deeply moved that I should never see
The flower and fruit of all the days to be,
A younger youth than mine, a merrier mirth.

But never ere this day I felt the sting
Of terror lest my burning tears should fall
For one who felt when first I felt the spring,
Heard from the wood the self-same cuckoo
 call,
Heard the same robin in the autumn sing,
Was one with me in life—in love—in all.

iii

Bid me remember, O my gracious Lord,
The flattering words of love are merely breath !
O not in roses wreath the shining sword,
Bid me remember, O my gracious Lord,
 The bitter taste of death !

Wrap not in clouds of dread for me that hour
When I must leave behind this house of clay,
When the grass withers and the shrunken
 flower !
Bid me, O Lord, in that most dreadful hour,
 Not fall, but fly away !

LXXXII

'Tis not Love that is dead,
But Hope, his sister fair.
They breathed the self-same air,
On the same food they fed.
The soul of Love with awful strength was filled
By Passion—but his sister, Hope, was killed.

LXXXIII

BAMBOROUGH

THE sun is not the sun, but very Light !
Is this the sand that drives across the sand,
Caught by the wind? Nay, but a royal flight
Of blessed spirits, sweeping through the land,
Urged by the Spirit ! And the living sky
Is Heaven indeed, my Heaven while you are by.

LXXXIV

I CHANCED to see, upon a day
Of blue beflecked with white and gray,
 A crowd of busy men and an old hag—
The crossing wires above the street—
Two friends that did each other greet—
 And England's flag.

LXXXV

COME back to me my swallow
 And leave me not forlorn,
Into the woods I follow
 The footsteps of the morn.
I thread the rustling hollow
 Before the day is born,
Come back to me my swallow
 And leave me not forlorn !

The light was dark without thee,
My bird of April days,
I almost came to doubt thee
When thou hadst gone thy ways—
The sunshine round about thee—
Into the land of rays.
The light was dark without thee,
My bird of April days.

LXXXVI

THISTLEDOWN

FIND me, O my true love, find me,
All the words by love made strongest,
All the words that last the longest,
For an oath, an oath to bind me !

In the East the dawn grows brighter,
On the wind I hear a whistle.
Light the down upon the thistle.
Yea, true love, but I am lighter !

LXXXVII

PRIDE

O MORTAL virtue and immortal sin,
How often hast thou led the fool aright,
Sent forth a shivering coward to the fight,
And made the worst man win !

Thine are the laurels giddy Pleasure lost,
The crown that hard Endeavour hardly
earned.
And Glory woos thee, whom thy foot hath
spurned,
With all her host.

He that hath thee, tho' poor in seeming wealth,
Is not bereft. He that hath all beside,
Lives like a beggar, being poor in pride,
And dies by stealth.

LXXXVIII

SUN AND WIND

DEEP in the heart of Winter lies a day
Bright from the treasures of perfect Spring.
Life stirs and wakes in each created thing.
December sleeps, and dreams, and dreams of
May.

Deep in the heart of Spring, when every flower
Is radiant, comes a day of bitter wind.
O blossom-laden boughs, untimely thinned,
Groan, for December holds no darker hour !

LXXXIX

AFFECTION

THE earth that made the rose,
She also is thy mother, and not I.
The flame wherewith thy maiden spirit glows
Was lighted at no hearth that I sit by.
I am as far below as heaven above thee.
Were I thine angel, more I could not love thee.

Bid me defend thee !
Thy danger over-human strength shall lend me,
A hand of iron and a heart of steel,
To strike, to wound, to slay, and not to feel.
But if you chide me,
I am a weak, defenceless child beside thee.

XC

GOODNESS

SHALL I be good ?

I dare not be as He.

I dare not sin.

Is that the good in me ?

“Call me not good !” said He when once He
trod

This earth. “There is but one good, that is
God.”

Shall I be good ?

Vainly I try.

For Satan is more strong,

Braver than I.

Each time I fail before him. From the rood
Look down on me, O God, to me be good !

XCI

WANDERERS

LOVE is a *Rome*, and many roads there be
Leading to that great City of Delight,
Old—new—religious—everything but free—
A dream by day—a solid town at night.
All roads are good for entrance, none for
flight,
And every traveller sees what he would see.

The roads lead hither over many a hill,
Through countries parted by the salt sea-foam,
And many names they bear—*Affliction* still
The safest—but at length they all lead home.
Accuse us not of wandering at our will !
Life's clearest voice it is that bids us roam.

XCII

DEPART from me. I know Thee not !

Within the Temple have I sought Thee,

And many a time have sold and bought Thee

In that unhallowed, holy spot.

Depart from me. I know Thee not !

Depart from me. I know Thee not !

Full oft among the poor I found Thee.

There did I grieve, neglect, and wound Thee.

I never strove to share Thy lot.

Depart from me. I know Thee not !

I know Thee not. Abide with me !

More than aught else do I admire Thee,

Above all earthly things desire Thee.

I am Thy prisoner. Make me free !

I know Thee not. Abide with me !

XCIII

AT A FRIENDS' MEETING

“STRANGERS are we and pilgrims here !”

So sing we every Sabbath day.

But surely pilgrimage is dear,

We linger so upon the way.

Is that the home, the Father kind,

Is that the country of our birth ?

Were we created deaf and blind,

That we prefer the toilsome earth ?

Its setting sun—its changing sea—

The day—the dark, refreshing night—

The winds that wander wide and free—

Are dearer than the Land of Light.

Though Age may sit in Beauty's place,

The eyes, that growing old wax dim,

Are fairer than the youthful face

Of Cherubim and Seraphim.

And when we lay them in the ground
The sting of death is living still,
Although we know that they have found
The city set upon an hill.

We sigh and weep and pray for rest,
And murmur that the way is long.
Alas ! the Islands of the Blest
Are only blest in psalm and song.

Nay, not in psalm, for David knew
The dread that pierces like a sword,
And had the faith to say it too :
“The dead they praise not Thee, O
Lord.”

The life that we so much despise
The Son hath deigned with us to share.
Shall we find favour in Thine eyes
By slighting what He made His care ?

We feel more truly than we speak,
Thou art the Life, and Thou hast said
That he who lives, however weak,
Shall not be numbered with the dead.

XCIV

KNOWLEDGE

LET weaker souls at His decree repine !
To us eternity in time was given.
Whene'er we parted, 'twas your death and mine.
Whene'er we met again, why then 'twas
Heaven.

Now let the tempest rise, the fierce wind blow,
And shake the house of life from floor to
rafter !

Whichever goes, whichever stays, we know
Both death and what comes after.

XCV

UNITY

THE sense of fellowship is grown
A radiant mystery.
The dark is shot with light ; the stone
Is light unto the eyes that see.

No more the wild confusèd main
Is tossed about with storms of fear.
The sea is singing ; and the rain
Is music to the ears that hear.

XCVI

WASTED

THOU show'st thy beauty unto all the men
That meet thee by the way,
And one day thou shalt render it again
To death and to decay.

Thou giv'st thy wisdom to a chosen few,
As 'twere some precious book,
Yet were there only two or three that knew
The art therein to look.

Thou giv'st thy laughter only unto one.
He hath no eyes to see.
Give, when his bitter jest with thee is done,
Thy tears to me !

XCVII

THE fire, the lamp, and I, were alone together.
Out in the street it was wild and windy weather.

The fire said, "Once I lived, and now I shine.
I was a wood once, and the wind was mine."

The lamp said, "Once I lived and was the Sun.
The fire and I, in those old days, were one."

The fire said, "Once I lived and saw the Spring.
I die in smoke to warm this mortal thing."

The lamp said, "I was once alive and free.
In smoke I die to let this mortal see."

Then I remembered all the beasts that died
That I might eat and might be satisfied.

Then I remembered how my feet were shod,
Thought of the myriad lives on which I trod,

And sighed to feel that as I went my way,
I was a murderer ninety times a day.

XCVIII

A WITNESS

I DID not see. How could I know ?

Down in the little wood

He—and he—together stood,

One above, one below.

The face of heaven was overcast.

The Moon among the driven clouds sailed fast.

I did not see. I turned my eyes away ;

And the Moon did not look.

If she—the sentinel—her post forsook,

What was I then that I should stay ?

The face of heaven was overcast.

The Moon among the driven clouds sailed fast.

XCIX

VENETA

WIND and waters ring the bells
That rang for them of high degree
Trumpets are the sounding shells
In the city under the sea.

Where a Queen was wont to hide
Her outwearied majesty,
Swim the fishes open-eyed
In the city under the sea.

Many a street lies broad and fair,
Many a palace fair and free,
Neither a man nor woman there,
In the city under the sea.

C

THE TRAIN

A GREEN eye—and a red—in the dark.
Thunder—smoke—and a spark.

It is there—it is here—flashed by.
Whither will the wild thing fly ?

It is rushing, tearing thro' the night,
Rending her gloom in its flight.

It shatters her silence with shrieks.
What is it the wild thing seeks ?

Alas ! for it hurries away
Them that are fain to stay.

Hurrah ! for it carries home
Lovers and friends that roam.

Where are you, Time and Space?
The world is a little place,
Your reign is over and done,
You are one.

CI

FLOWERS OF THE FIELD

THE flowers of the field were sun and dew
By morning and by night, O !
'Twas water of fire in the field that grew,
With colours of delight, O !

The flowers of the field are honey and hay.
They bloom in the field no more, O !
Men took all that they could away.
The bees they went before, O !

CII

COMPANIONSHIP

THE men and women round thee, what are
they?

Frail as the flowers, less lasting than the snow.
If there be angels flitting in the day,
Who knows those angels? Who shall ever
know?

Let them alone and go thou on thy way !
They came like dreams ; like dreams they
come and go.

Nay, the companions of thy timeless hours
Are dreams dreamt first for thee by them of
old,

That thou might'st dream them after ! These
are powers

Unending and unaging—never cold—
White as the driven snow, fair as the flowers.
These be thy verities, to have, to hold !

CIII

ON THE ARRIVAL OF A VISITOR

FAREWELL, my Loneliness !

I that had thought to curse thee, come to
bless.

Deep skies and glowing stars in thee I found.

A stream ran through the sandy wilderness
And roses blossomed on the desert ground.

Belovèd Solitude !

No voices over-eager, harsh, or rude,
Mar the sweet music of thy gracious hours.

Among the crowd of those too near and dear
Too often have I known disgust and fear,
The isolation of those glorious powers
That in self-knowledge are, not, not ourselves,
but ours.

CIV

Lo, when the house is empty come the dead,
And once again they say the words they said,
Breaking the charmed silence of the grave !
I have sat lonely with my closest friend
As in the throng. Ah, wherefore, to what end ?
The dead have power to give more than the
living gave.

Lo, when the house is empty, live the dreams
Of the old poets—and my chamber seems
A palace for the women long ago
That, whilst the living shadows round me move,
Are shadows also, dumb, remote from love,
Vain figures, vainly mouthing at a show !

CV

STREET LANTERNS

COUNTRY roads are yellow and brown.
We mend the roads in London town.

Never a hansom dare come nigh.
Never a cart goes rolling by,

An unwonted silence steals
In between the turning wheels.

Quickly ends the autumn day,
And the workman goes his way,

Leaving, midst the traffic rude,
One small isle of solitude,

Lit, throughout the lengthy night,
By the little lantern's light.

Jewels of the dark have we,
Brighter than the rustic's be.

Over the dull earth are thrown
Topaz, and the ruby stone.

CVI

WHERE A ROMAN VILLA STOOD,
ABOVE FREIBURG

ON alien ground, breathing an alien air,
A Roman stood, far from his ancient home,
And gazing, murmured, "Ah, the hills are fair,
But not the hills of Rome !"

Descendant of a race to Romans kin,
Where the old son of Empire stood, I stand.
The self-same rocks fold the same valley in,
Untouched of human hand.

Over another shines the self-same star,
Another heart with nameless longing fills,
Crying aloud, "How beautiful they are,
But not our English hills !"

CVII

“DEEP CALLETH UNTO DEEP”

DEEP are thy waters, Love, in every heart.
Who is there that hath ever sounded these?
Lightly we sail the still, unfathomed seas,
Without a compass and without a chart.
Yet are there two that have essayed this art—
The mother with her firstborn on her knees,
The son whose cordial spirits shrink and freeze
To see the life from whence he lived, depart.
These who have learnt that all their strength is
 weak,
These who have striven in vain and vainly
 found
Their resolution but an idle freak
And all their spoken faith an empty sound,
These have let down the plummet ; could they
 speak,
They would but say, “It never touched the
 ground.”

CVIII

IMAGINATION

I CALLED you, fiery spirits, and ye came !
Earth was the earth no more ; the solid ground
Was as a maze of cloud-like glories found,
The sun was music and the wind was flame.
A rainbow shone about the sacred name
Of all the virtues. Thought in rapture drowned,
Wild ecstasy it was to hear the sound,
The fluttering of the wings of Love and Fame.
I called you, fiery spirits ! When your task
Was over, faint, weary, and short of breath,
I would have driven you hence. I did but ask
The old life that I led, the life beneath.
In vain ! The world henceforward seems a
 masque
Fit for the haunted rooms of dreamy death.

CIX

SEPTEMBER

Now every day the bracken browner grows,
Even the purple stars
Of clematis, that shone about the bars,
Grow browner ; and the little autumn rose
Dons, for her rosy gown,
Sad weeds of brown.

Now falls the eve ; and ere the morning sun,
Many a flower her sweet life will have lost,
Slain by the bitter frost,
Who slays the butterflies also, one by one ;
The tiny beasts
That go about their business and their
feasts.

CX

O EARTH, my mother ! not upon thy breast
Would I my heavy head in death recline,
Would I lay down these weary limbs of mine
When the great Voice shall call me into rest.
Too well have I obeyed thy gay behest,
Too eagerly have worshipped at thy shrine ;
The better part of all my life was thine,
I used thee as a lover not a guest.
I would not make with thee my dying bed,
Low, low beneath thy lowest let me be ;
Far from thy living, farther from thy dead,
From every fetter of remembrance free,
Deep in some ocean cave, and overhead
The ceaseless sounding of thy waves, O Sea !

CXI

LOVE went a-riding over the earth,
On Pegasus he rode.
The flowers before him sprang to birth,
And the frozen rivers flowed.

Then all the youths and the maidens cried,
"Stay here with us, King of Kings!"
But Love said, "No! for the horse I ride,
For the horse I ride has wings."

CXII

FRIENDS—WITH A DIFFERENCE

O, ONE I need to love me,
And one to understand,
And one to soar above me,
And one to clasp my hand,

And one to make me slumber,
And one to bid me strive,
But seven's the sacred number
That keeps the soul alive.

And first and last of seven,
And all the world and more,
Is she I need in Heaven,
And may not need before.

CXIII

THEE have I sought, divine Humility,
Within, without !
And Science did I take as guide to thee ;
She showed me Doubt.

Then did I turn to Art : "Be thou my
friend,
My pride destroy."
She sang of Glory that should never end
And taught me Joy.

“ Nature, be thou my monitress ! ” I cried

In accents clear.

She shook the very base of human pride,

And whispered, “ Fear.”

Lastly of Love did I beseech this grace,

To come to thee ;

Love turned on me a dark and dreadful face,

’Twas Jealousy.

My faith had gone, my hope was well-nigh dead,

My strength to seek ;

Last came a memory. “ Learn of Me,” it said,

“ For I am meek.”

CXIV

DEAR builder of the Bridge, with thee I stood

And watched the waters flow

And heard thy cry of “ Onward ” o’er the flood,

Between two skies, one over, one below.

Whether it was the outward eye that thought,
The inward eye that saw,
I know not ; into harmony were brought
The floating image and abiding law.

CXV

FORGIVE? O yes ! How lightly, lightly said !
Forget? No, never, while the ages roll,
Till God slay o'er again the undying dead,
And quite unmake my soul !

CXVI

ON a day, and on a day,
When my love was far away,
Down I sat and spake to him
Words whereat my eyes grew dim ;
Words whereby my cheeks became
Suddenly a burning flame ;
Words wherewith my hands grew cold
As the touch of churchyard mould.

CXVII

WHETHER I live, or whether I die,
 Whatever the worlds I see,
I shall come to you by-and-by,
 And you will come to me.

Whoever was foolish, we were wise,
 We crossed the boundary line,
I saw my soul look out of your eyes,
 You saw your soul in mine.

CXVIII

THOU that canst sit in silence hour by hour
And know God is in His minutest flower,
 And watch His myriad!ways among the grass,
And feel His touch on every frond of fern,
On the small shadows as they slowly turn,
 And on the little creatures as they pass,

What blindness is it that doth hold thine eyes,
Make streets a Hell and meadows Paradise,
To shut Him out from His great creature,
Man.
Hath He not writ Himself in every face?
Awake—and be not impotent to trace
What is and has been since the world began !

CXIX

ONE DAY IN EVERY YEAR

ONE day in every year
A hope that is a fear
Comes very near.

Once, every year, I say,
“ Less long now the delay
Shorter the way.”

Whether for joy or woe
I say that this is so
I do not know.

Only one thing is clear :
A hope that is a fear
Comes near.

CXX

A DEDICATION

LIFE of my learning, fire of all my Art,
O thou to whom my days obscurely tend,
Dear past expression, friend beyond a friend,
Soul of my soul and heart within my heart,

Hear and forgive thy servant over bold
Who dared to write the words he could not
say,
And with too eager hand hath given away
That which his eyes alone to thee unfold !

CXXI

EGYPT'S might is tumbled down

Down a-down the deeps of thought ;

Greece is fallen and Troy town,

Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,

Venice' pride is nought.

But the dreams their children dreamed

Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,

Shadowy as the shadows seemed,

Airy nothing, as they deemed,

These remain.

CXXII

AN INSINCERE WISH ADDRESSED TO A BEGGAR

WE are not near enough to love,

I can but pity all your woe ;

For wealth has lifted me above,

And falsehood set you down below.

If you were true, we still might be
 Brothers in something more than name ;
And were I poor, your love to me
 Would make our differing bonds the same.

But golden gates between us stretch,
 Truth opens her forbidding eyes ;
You can't forget that I am rich,
 Nor I that you are telling lies.

Love never comes but at love's call,
 And pity asks for him in vain ;
Because I cannot give you all,
 You give me nothing back again.

And you are right with all your wrong,
 For less than all is nothing too ;
May Heaven beggar me ere long,
 And Truth reveal herself to you !

CXXIII

“REMEMBER NOT OUR INIQUITIES”

“Remember not !” I say to Him whose face
Is as the earnest of eternal grace.

“Remember not !” If Thou remember all,
Even from Thy grace even I, Thy child, must
fall.

Yet on my knees I dare not breathe a prayer
That is but empty coinage of the air.

There shall not fail one tittle or one jot,
And shall Thy children cry “Remember not !”

CXXIV

O MIGHTY Spirit, whither art thou fled ?

No mate was found in all the world for thee,
Whom hast thou chosen for thy company,
In all the shadowy regions of the dead ?

CXXV

AH, I have striven, I have striven,
That it might vanish as the smoke ;
Angels remember it in heaven.
In vain I have striven, I have striven
To forget the word that I spoke.

See, I am fighting, I am fighting
That I may bring it to nought.
It is written in fiery writing,
In vain I am fighting, I am fighting
To forget the thought that I thought.

CXXVI

WEARY was I of toil and strife,
And weary of drawing breath ;
And still, whatever I did for Life
It went the way to death.

It went adown the dusty road,
 Whence there is no recall ;
None may bear another's load,
 For the load is borne by all.

“ Some of the souls escape and fly,
 Tho' the grave to us be dumb,
They do not know what it is to die,
 For they make the world-to-come.

“ And see, of the death of the body of man
 Is made the wholesome earth,
The sun will shine and the wind will fan
 And flowers be brought to birth.

“ There's many a bough that greenlier swings
 Where he hath measured his span,
But, tell me, where is the flower that springs
 From the death of the soul of man ? ”

Then was I ware of a little child,
With eyes that I could not see ;
For all they were so gentle and mild,
They shook the heart in me.

As he stood beneath the tree of thorn,
Under the dazzling blue,
He was all the men that ever were born,
And all the women too.

The roses twined around his feet,
The birds about him sang,
And all the beasts of the field to greet
Their lord and master sprang.

Of the rotten souls to earth that fell
Is made this awful flower ;
And he rules the living, straight from hell,
With the very devil's power.

CXXVII

WE were not made for refuges of lies,
And false embattled bulwarks will not screen
us.

We mocked the careful shieldings of the wise,
And only utter truth can be between us.

Long suns and moons have wrought this day at
length,

The heavens in naked majesty have told thee.
To see me as I am have thou the strength ;
And, even as thou art, I dare behold thee.

CXXVIII

SOUNDS

THE clock !

A crowing cock !

And under these

The murmur of the wind among the trees,

The hum of bees.

The clock is busy Man with Time at strife,
Wasting brief hours to measure out his life !
The cock vainglorious Man chanting his
 praise,
Forgetful of the time—how short the days !

The wind is Man, dreaming and dreaming still,
Silence with music evermore to fill.
The bee is Man that neither hastes nor shirks,
Not happy and unhappy as he works.

CXXIX

TO A BULLYING WIND THAT ROSE AT SUNSET

ACROSS the golden clouds gray clouds are flying ;
 Shepherd that changest each as thou dost
 drive,
Why, when the day whose birth thou lov'st is
 dying,
Spend'st thou thy wealth to keep the clouds
 alive ?

Why must thou, Wind, the silent trees awaken
Quiet and still they stood the live-long day.
What secrets from the tossing leaves are
shaken,
What forced caresses make it worth the fray?
But for thy toil this gentle hour were given
To musing recollections and to prayer.
Ah, who can pray when there is war in Heaven,
And these wild angels whistle through the
air?

CXXX

NO NEWSPAPERS

WHERE, to me, is the loss
Of the scenes they saw—of the sounds they
heard;
A butterfly flits across,
Or a bird;
The moss is growing on the wall,
I heard the leaf of the poppy fall.

CXXXI

THERE with two lives before me did I choose,
There did I lose to win, and win to lose.
Not till the day all secrets are displayed
Shall that great Angel shew the choice I
made.

CXXXII

O TELL me not that years will give
Oblivion as they fly :
The hope whereby alone I live
Is one with memory.

CXXXIII

“THEY served with Nelson, and with Nelson
died.”

Well was it said, we may not in our pride

Utter the praise of ancestors like these.
Yet may we speak it humbly, on our knees ;
For were we silent all, 'tis past a doubt
The very stones against us would cry out.

CXXXIV

O DARKNESS gather round ;
Let no sweet sound
Scatter the silence of this one sweet hour.
I will not see the fairest,
I will forego the rarest,
Sooner than breathe upon Time's perfect flower.

CXXXV

No longer live !
Thou hast betrayed thy trust.
Dust art thou,
Turn again to crumbling dust !

CXXXVI

WIND

O VOICE that ever wanderest o'er the earth
Lamenting, roaring, sighing,
Where was thy place of birth,
And where shall be thy dying?

CXXXVII

THE song of nightingales
When the moon fails
Along the lake and down the grassy shore—
This is not yours to hear, who often hear,
But it is mine, my dear,
Who heard it once and hear it evermore.

CXXXVIII

I SHALL forget you, O my dead,
I shall forget you !
You will not care.
Less visible than air,
You are where no forgetfulness may fret you.
But I, how shall I bear
Visible earth, my dead, when I forget you ?

CXXXIX

TWO HEAVENS

FAIR, O Nature, thy fulfilling !
Man may never match thee there.
Nay—for his achievement, killing
Flowery promise, works despair.
Flower and fruit to thee are given,
Autumn fair as Spring in birth.
Thou revealest Heaven from Heaven ;
Man in Heaven discovers earth.

CXL

DEATH AND THE LADY

TURN in, my lord, turn in, she said ;
As it were the Father of Sin
I have hated the Father of the Dead,
The slayer of my kin ;
By the Father of the Living led,
Turn in, my lord, turn in.

We were foes of old ; thy touch was cold,
But mine is warm as life ;
I have struggled and made thee loose thy hold,
I have turned aside the knife.
Despair itself in me was bold,
I have striven, and won the strife.

But that which conquered thee and rose
 Again to earth descends ;
For the last time we have come to blows,
 And the long combat ends.
The worst and secretest of foes,
 Be now my friend of friends.

CXLI

THE CONTENTS OF AN INK-BOTTLE

WELL of blackness, all defiling,
Full of flattery and reviling,
Ah, what mischief hast thou wrought
Out of what was airy thought,
What beginnings and what ends,
Making and dividing friends !

Colours of the rainbow lie
In thy tint of ebony ;

Many a fancy have I found
Bright upon that sombre ground ;
Cupid plays along the edge,
Skimming o'er it like a midge ;
Niobe in turn appears,
Thinning it with crystal tears.

False abuse and falser praise,
Falsest lays and roundelays !
One thing, one alone, I think,
Never yet was found in ink ;—
Truth lies not, the truth to tell,
At the bottom of this well !

CXLII

CHILLINGHAM

I

THROUGH the sunny garden
The humming bees are still ;
The fir climbs the heather,
The heather climbs the hill.

The low clouds have riven
A little rift through.
The hill climbs to heaven,
Far away and blue.

II

O the high valley, the little low hill,
And the cornfield over the sea,
The wind that rages and then lies still,
And the clouds that rest and flee !

O the gray island in the rainbow haze,
And the long thin spits of land,
The roughening pastures and the stony ways,
And the golden flash of the sand !

O the red heather on the moss-wrought rock,
And the fir-tree stiff and straight,
The shaggy old sheep-dog barking at the flock,
And the rotten old five-barred gate !

O the brown bracken, the blackberry bough,
The scent of the gorse in the air !
I shall love them ever as I love them now,
I shall weary in Heaven to be there !

III

Strike, Life, a happy hour, and let me live
But in that grace !
I shall have gathered all the world can give,
Unending Time and Space !

Bring light and air—the thin and shining air
Of the North land,
The light that falls on tower and garden there,
Close to the gold sea-sand.

Bring flowers, the latest colours of the earth,
Ere nun-like frost
Lay her hard hand upon this rainbow mirth,
With twinkling emerald crossed.

The white star of the traveller's joy, the deep
Empurpled rays that hide the smoky stone,
The dahlia rooted in Egyptian sleep,
The last frail rose alone.

Let music whisper from a casement set
By them of old,
Where the light smell of lavender may yet
Rise from the soft loose mould.

Then shall I know, with eyes and ears awake,
Not in bright gleams,
The joy my Heavenly Father joys to make
For men who grieve, in dreams !

CXLIII

GUY'S CLIFFE AT NIGHT

HEAVILY plumed the stately elm-tree hung,
The sentinel fir stood straight.
A star went in and out the boughs among.
On the live air of evening there was flung
The scent of the tall lily, white and great,
The garden's altar candle, shining late !

Far far away I heard a distant bell,
Faint—and again more loud—
The waters of the dim weir rose and fell.
All other things were silent. Who can tell

The murmur of the wind that fell and rose ?
And whence he came—whither he went—who
knows ?

CXLIV

NEW YEAR'S EVE

SPEAK to the Wind and bid him stay,
Lest that within find out a way.

Call to the Sea to hush his wail,
That is failing which must not fail.

Cry to Time as he goes by,
That is dying which cannot die.

CXLV

ON A SOLDIER WHO DIED OF
ILLNESS

GIVE him his martial honours, for he fought
A harder foe than man, and ne'er betrayed
The trust upon him laid ;
Nay, not so much as by a rebel thought.

Not where the golden hope of glory lured,
Not on the field of fame he fought and fell.
But he endured right well ;
Yea, as a soldier should, he silently endured.

CXLVI

LILIES AND DOVES (MAY, 1902)

BRING not the lily hither ; she is pale,
And we have bought with blood the end of
strife.
She lives a day ; and then her glories fail.
The peace we died for shall outlive our life.

Make not the dove an emblem ; she hath wings,
And she will fly : 'tis not *her* cooing song
That shall proclaim the concord whence there
springs
Stern peace—a joy inflexible and strong.

CXLVII

ON SUCH A DAY

SOME hang above the tombs,
Some weep in empty rooms,
I, when the iris blooms,
Remember.

I, when the cyclamen
Opens her buds again,
Rejoice a moment—then
Remember.

CLXVIII
EVENING

I

THE great rain is over,
The little rain begun,
Falling from the higher leaves,
Bright in the sun,
Down to the lower leaves,
One drop by one.

II

All greenery hath faded from the trees,
The soft red earth turns brown,
No leaflet even stirring in the breeze,
Slowly the night sinks down.
The sun is gone, but in the lighted west
The gracious tokens of his going are,
And quick to shine out-gleaming all the rest,
Brighter for darkness grows a single star.

III

Now the sky is inky black,
And the clouds a driven rack,
Now the wind of death is blowing.

“Sceptre and crown
Shall tumble down.”

How the kings of the earth are going !

IV

Mysterious Earth ! mother of trees and flowers,
Born in thy busy darkness—home of men !
Whose turning sets the timeless flight of hours,
Who weavest life and dost unweave again ;

In some far distant star, whereof no word
Hath traversed space, or human or divine,
They call thee by a name we never heard.
Night after night they look to see thee shine.

Old Earth, if thou were burnt, a blazing light,
With all the men and beasts that in thee are,
The dwellers in the kindred worlds of night
Would haply say, "There fell a shooting
star !"

CXLIX

ARM thee ! Arm thee ! Forth upon the road !
Michael is calling the hosts of God.

Arm thee ! Arm thee ! Out into the night !
Forth again, forth again, child of the light !

Arm thee ! Arm thee ! Take the sword
Bright with the might of the glory of the Lord.

Arm thee ! Arm thee ! The morning Kings
Have heard the murmur of Michael's wings.

CL

HER face, for utter stillness, hath no peer.

Whether the Spring makes verdant hill and
plain,

Or the snow falleth, or the soft sweet rain,
She changeth not throughout the changing
year,

Her eyes are tranquil : not the hosts of Fear,
Not grief, although he rent her heart in twain,
Nor joy, although he gave it her again,
Could from those crystal depths compel a tear.

The fighting waters, meeting as they fight
In frothy combat with the flood increase,
They leave the pool above them clear and
bright,
But flecked with foam, to show where strife
did cease.

How vain this token of their vanished might !

How dreadful was the war that left this
peace !

CLI

BLIND

THE branch breaks because it is weak.

Never talk of the wind !

“ Was it his parents, Rabbi ? Speak !

Or was it he who sinned ? ”

But He that made the branch and the wind,

And men and women out of clay,

Gave answer : “ This man hath not sinned,

Nor they.”

CLII

GOOD Friday in my heart ! Fear and affright !

My thoughts are the Disciples when they fled,

My words the words that priest and soldier
said,

My deed the spear to desecrate the dead.

And day, Thy death therein, is changed to
night.

Then Easter in my heart sends up the sun.
My thoughts are Mary, when she turned to see.
My words are Peter, answering, "Lov'st thou
Me?"
My deeds are all Thine own drawn close to
Thee,
And night and day, since Thou dost rise, are
one.

CLIII

LORD of the winds, I cry to Thee,
I that am dust,
And blown about by every gust,
I fly to Thee.

Lord of the waters, unto Thee I call.
I that am weed upon the waters borne,
And by the waters torn,
Tossed by the waters, at Thy feet I fall

CLIV

TO C. E. G. ON HER BIRTHDAY

THY little destiny
Hits the bright stars on high,
Strikes roots into the deep.
Waking, thou dost not know
What armies with thee go,
Who slumbers in thy sleep.

CLV

THE SINGING OF THE CHILDREN
FOR THEO

LITTLE Theo's gone away,
Gone away.
We shall never see her play,
See her play,
Here and there, the livelong day.

God in Heaven loves us all,
Loves us all.
Little Theo heard Him call,
Heard Him call ;
And she let her playthings fall.

God in Heaven loved her so,
Loved her so.
“ Little Theo, will you go ?
Will you go ? ”
And she left us here below.

Very gently let us sing,
Let us sing.
Theo now remembering,
Remembering,
Loving more than anything !

CLVI

GIBBERISH

MANY a flower have I seen blossom,
Many a bird for me will sing.
Never heard I so sweet a singer,
Never saw I so fair a thing.

She is a bird, a bird that blossoms,
She is a flower, a flower that sings ;
And I a flower when I behold her,
And when I hear her, I have wings.

CLVII

IN LONDON TOWN

IT was a bird of Paradise,
Over the roofs he flew.
All the children, in a trice,

Clapped their hands and cried, "How
nice !"

"Look—his wings are blue !"

His body was of ruby red,
His eyes were burning gold.
All the grown-up people said,
"What a pity the creature is not dead,
For then it could be sold !"

One was braver than the rest.
He took a loaded gun ;
Aiming at the emerald crest,
He shot the creature through the breast.
Down it fell in the sun.

It was not heavy, it was not fat,
And folk began to stare.
"We cannot eat it, that is flat !
And such outlandish feathers as that
Why, who could ever wear ?"

They flung it into the river brown.

“A pity the creature died !”

With a smile and with a frown,

Thus they did in London town ;

But all the children cried.

CLVIII

THE sum of loss I have not reckoned yet,

I cannot tell.

For ever it was morning when we met,

Night when we bade farewell !

CLIX

ARE the dead as calm as those

They leave behind them, friends or foes

However a man may love or fight

Calm he falls asleep at night !

Fast the living sleeps and well ;

But the spirits—who can tell ?

Are they as a rushing flame

For the Sun from whence it came ?

Driven on from star to star,

Where the other dead men are ?

CLX

NICODEMUS

WITH slow and stealthy steps he trod

The darkening and deserted streets ;

And no one in the market greets

The man upon his way to God.

By night he left the splendid home

That sheltered many a sleeping guest.

One and another lay at rest—

The master of the house would roam.

Was there a single soul that knew?

No! For he feared the eye of scorn,
The crooked laugh of anger born.
Only the bats about him flew.

The broidered borders of his gown
He covered o'er, that none might see.
Shall good come out of Galilee?
This were the mock of all the town.

But in the City named for Peace
No peace his weary heart had known.
And ever in the crowd alone
He waged a war that would not cease.

He came by night—and yet he came.
And He that was Himself the Way
Shall own him in the Judgment Day,
And to the world confess his name.

CLXI

THREE ASPECTS

SOME showed me Life as 'twere a royal game,
Shining in every colour of the sun,
With prizes to be played for, one by one
Love, riches, fame.

Some showed me Life as 'twere a terrible fight,
A ceaseless striving 'gainst unnumbered foes,
A battle ever harder to the close,
Ending in night.

Thou—thou didst make of Life a vision deep
Of the deep happiness the spirit feels
When heavenly music Heaven itself reveals
And passions sleep.

CLXII

LOW-FLYING swallow, tho' the sky be fair,
The sunshine soft,
Thou seekest not with love the upper air,
Soaring aloft ;
Thy sharp and gleamy wing goes flashing by
me
Thy dusky white and blue thou'lt not deny
me !

Thy nest's a bit of mine—thy little home
Set in the eaves.
When roses leave the wall, where wilt thou
roam,
When summer leaves ?
Not lightly, flying friend, can I forego thee,
The longest day is all too short to know thee !

CLXIII

THE HAVEN

WHERE the gray bushes by the gray sea grow,
Where the gray islands lie,
Naked and bare to all the winds that blow,
Under the dim gray sky—
The very flowers are gray, and dare not show
The blue we know the little harebell by.

CLXIV

“CUT IT DOWN”

BY a dim road, o’ergrown with dry thin grass,
A little straggling, wild, wind-beaten tree
Stood, like a sentry, where no feet might pass,
And storm-swept by the sea.

What was the secret of that lonely place?
Had some accursèd thing gone by this way,
Leaving the horror of his evil face
On leaf and bough and spray?

I know not. But the very sunbeams took
The darkness of the gnarled and twisted
stem ;
The summer air those wrinkled leaves forsook
Nor ever played in them.

CLXV

CHANGE

AH, there is no abiding !
Signs from heaven are sent.
Over the grass the wind went gliding,
And the green grass grew silver as he went.

Ah, there is no remaining !
Ever the tide of ocean ebbs and flows.
Over the blue sea goes the wind complaining,
And the blue sea turns emerald as he goes.

CLXVI

HAIL AND FAREWELL

FAREWELL, my joy ! For other hearts the
Spring,

For other eyes the roses ; but for me
The iron gate, the shadowy cypress-tree,
The solemn dirge that cloistered voices sing.

Farewell, my joy ! Alas, I loved thee well !
For no light matter had I let thee go.
I cherished thee in rain, and wind, and snow.
I bound thee to my breast with many a spell.

Hail and farewell, my joy ! If I might give
To one sweet friend the rapture that I miss,
Read in her eyes that ecstasy of bliss,
Tho' death were in my own, I yet should live.

CLXVII

BROKEN FRIENDSHIP

GIVE me no gift ! Less than thyself were
nought.

It was thyself, alas ! not thine I sought.
Once reigned I as a monarch in this heart,
Now from the doors a stranger I depart.

CLXVIII

IN THAT SLEEP OF DEATH WHAT DREAMS MAY COME ? ”

O GRANT me darkness ! Let no gleam
Recall the visionary ray !
Give me to sleep without a dream.
Too often have I dreamt by day.
The dreams of day are all too strong ;
Give me undreaming sleep, and long.

If blackest night be of the stuff
Whereof sun-woven days are made,
I that have dreamed, and dreamed enough
Tremble, of dreamier dreams afraid.
Give to the heart Thy dreams have blest
The dark unconsciousness of rest !

CLXIX

THE MAIDEN

WHO was this that came by the way,
When the flowers were springing ?
She bore in her hair the buds of May,
And a bird on her shoulder, singing.

A girdle of the fairest green
Her slender waist confinèd.
And such a flame was never seen
As in her eyes there shinèd.

By the way she came, that way she went,
And took the sunlight with her.
The May of life shall all be spent
Ere she again come hither !

CLXX

JANUARY THE FIRST

SWEETEST wishes didst thou send
For a New Year's greeting friend !
“ Many pleasant years may we
Together yet in friendship see !
If the Day of Dooming nears,
Many sweet uncounted years ! ”

Ah, but here and now we know
Each the other's outward show !
How to find you there and then,
Tho' you be a man of men,
If I see not eye and brow
Fashioned as I see them now ?

Ugly thought, that we may meet,
Nor feel sure enough to greet.
Have you neither doubts nor fears
Of the strange, uncounted years ?

CLXXI

GOLD

I HAVE not loved the gold of the mine.
I have not loved the image of gold.
But I have loved the gold divine
That springs in April from the mould ;
And I have loved to see thee shine,
Thou Sun, that makest all things gold !

CLXXII

O let me be in loving nice,
Dainty, fine, and o'er precise,
That I may charm my charmèd dear
As tho' I felt a secret fear

To lose what never can be lost,
Her faith who still delights me most !
So shall I be more than true,
Ever in my ageing new.
So dull habit shall not be
Wrongly called Fidelity.

CLXXIII

YOUTH'S DYING

Die, Youth, die, there are none to lament thee,
Those that have loved thee, think thee living
yet.
Hues as of life their blind love hath lent thee.

Ah, they forget !

Well hast thou fought, yea, mightily hast
striven ;

Those that have loved thee shall not know
how hard

Earth bore thee down, and Hell and highest
Heaven,

Wounded and scarred.

Die, Youth, die, for I cannot bear thy dying !
Life's Death-in-Life, and Death is all in all.
See the dead leaves from the barren trees are
flying,
Hark, the winds call !

CLXXIV

THREE HELPERS IN BATTLE

I HAVE not been as Joshua when he fought
The hosts of Amalek in the valley found.
My voice hath never, like a trumpet sound,
Victory for the falling victors wrought.
But I, with Aaron, faint yet unafraid,
Held up the hands of Moses while he prayed.

CLXXV

PRAISE

AH, who shall Praise receive

And not profane her ?

Fool were I to believe,

Churl to disdain her !

Praise is the kindly love

Of all a nation,

Lifting the man above

His lower station.

Praise is a mortal hate ;

In blood, not money,

He pays who takes the bait,

Swallows the honey.

Imperial renown,

How may I win thee ?

Praise me, and I shall own

The strength of ten within me.

Praise me, and I shall sink
In shallow water ;
Folly upon the brink,
Vanity's daughter !

Alone they safely trod
The flowery mazes
Who loved the praise of God
More than man's praises.

CLXXVI

JOY IN JOY

IN the blue and golden summer weather,
When sun and moon held sway,
I blessed the fair because they were fair
And the gay because they were gay.

I blessed their flocks and blessed their herds,
And charmed them from all care,
Because the gay were gay as birds
And because the fair were fair.

CLXXVII

TWO

No nearer to thy presence let me stand !
Fate set me in a strange and distant land !
There let my life run out its tranquil course,
Unchecked, as now, with every painful breath,
To feel between us a dividing force
More strong than Death !

And say not thou, "This is Love's waning
hour."

By Love's own God, I never felt his power,

The all-commanding terror of his bliss,
Never in passion's noontide loved thee more.
When I compare my former state with this,
I never loved before.

CLXXVIII

As I went singing over the earth,
Many a song I heard,—
A song of death and a song of mirth,
A song that was of little worth,
And the song of a bird.

CLXXIX

INGRATO COR

ALL that love hath to give to me is given.
Alas for the unutterable pain !
To love that showered on me the pearls of
heaven
I have no gift that I can give again,—
Not the least gem of earth, from the rock riven—
I search my empty treasury in vain.

CLXXX

AFTER ST. AUGUSTINE

SUNSHINE let it be or frost,
Storm or calm, as Thou shalt choose ;
Though Thine every gift were lost,
Thee thyself we could not lose.

CLXXXI

“AT EVENING TIME IT SHALL BE
LIGHT ”

SINCE Isaac in the fields at eventide
Went mourning for a mother lately lost,
And saw towards the East the veiled bride
Who came to meet him, counting well the
cost,
How many an Isaac hath the evening blest,
Bringing him light, when all he craved was
rest !

CLXXXII

FIGHTING would I have you die
With that look upon your face,
When the spirit of the race
Flashes in the kindled eye.

CLXXXIII

Two differing sorrows made these eyes grow
dim :
Woe, for which all must weep, while weep
they can,
And that more poignant anguish known to him
Whose grief's the jest of every other man.

CLXXXIV

THE KING

IT was but the lightest word of the King,
When he was neither merry nor sad ;
It was but a very little thing,
Yet it made his servant glad.

He gave a look as it befell,
Between a smile and a smothered sigh.
Whether he meant it, who can tell?
But the man went out to die.

CLXXXV

THE SECOND TIME

I CANNOT love you well, love,
I cannot love again.
Your heaven is my hell, love,
Your rapture is my pain.

I cannot say once more, love,
The words that have been said.
My hand is on the door, love,
My heart is with the dead.

When you would bid me stay, love,
A voice is in mine ear,
That cries, "Away, away, love !
How shouldst thou linger here? "

You warmed me at your fire, love,
But I myself am cold.
God grant you your desire, love,
And new love for the old.

CLXXXVI

LOVE, the immortal thing, by Time constrained,
Is as a spirit by some devil bound,
His voice an unintelligible sound,
His aspect harsh despair and beauty feigned.

CLXXXVII

HUSH

SHE sleeps so lightly, that in trembling fear
Beside her, where she lies asleep, I kneel,
The rush of thought and supplication staying,
Lest by some inward sense she see and hear,
If I too clearly think, too loudly feel,
And break her rest by praying.

CLXXXVIII

A MOTHER TO A BABY

WHERE were you, Baby?

Where were you, dear?

Even I have known you

Only a year.

You were born, Baby,

When I was born.

Twelve months ago you

Left me forlorn.

Why did you leave me,

Heart of my heart?

Then I was all of you,

Now you are part.

You lived while I lived,

We two were one.

We two are two now

While the days run.

Every maid born, love,
Womanly, mild,
Is in herself, love,
Mother and child.

CLXXXIX

ON A SUDDEN DEPARTURE

STAY, stay my heart, what is it thou dost feel?

There's many cross the sea and come again.

Why should the waves thy only treasure steal?

Is she alone the sport of wind and rain?

She will return once more to help and heal,

Refrain, my heart, refrain.

Possess thyself in patience, thinking how

Thou wilt endure the inevitable day

When for that voyage, either she or thou,

Whence there is no return, must go away.

Then, then gird up thy strength to bear ; but now

Stay, stay my heart, thy restless beating stay.

CXC

SAY THIS

SAY that I lived a life of sun and storm,
 Tho' sun prevailed.

Say that I saw an ever blessed form,
 And strove and failed.

Say that I spent on love my latest breath,
 And spent it well.

Say that I died a happy soldier's death,
 And fighting fell.

CXCI

TAR UBLIA CHI BIEN EIMA

To me realities but seem
The offspring of a foolish dream.
The things that were, alone are true,
The Past is Present here with you.

With you among the flowers I stray,
That grow not here but far away,
And gazing from your eyes I see
A soul for ever lost to me.

CXCII

SLEEP

OTHERS may praise thee, Sleep ; so will not I.

I loathe thee from the bottom of my heart.

Thou art a dull and ill-conceivèd lie,

To turn quick nature into cunning art.

“The sleeping and the dead are pictures.” Yea,

I love not pictures eyeless, soulless, still,

Mere portraits of the perishable clay,

Bereft of reason, passion, strength, and will.

Others may woo thee, Sleep ; so will not I.

Dear is each minute of my conscious breath,
Hard fate, that, ere the time be come to die,
Myself, to live, must nightly mimic death.

CXCIII

CONTRADICTIONS

WHEN I am dead, I know that thou wilt weep,
I that have never caused thee grief before,
I that have soothed thee, sung thy woes to
sleep,
I shall have wrought thee sorrow wild and deep,
And made thy burden more.

When I am dead, I know thou wilt forget,
Thou that didst never yet forget thy friend.
“ Grieve not ! ” I cry ; “ I would not have thee
fret ”—

“ Remember ! I would live within thee yet.”
In vain, I know the end.

CXCIV

ASTROLOGY

SHE sought the stars, she told me I must die,
What time my twenty summers had gone by.
Because her voice changed, as she told me this,
To hear my doom was agony of bliss.

CXCV

A CHILD'S DAY

ALL day long he has been busy
Little barrows trundling round
One especial plot of ground ;
I should think he must be dizzy.

Not the little busy bee,
Not the merchant in the City,
Not the Brotherhood of Pity,
E'er was busier than he.

When the Sun got up this morning
He to feed the flowers began
With a scarlet watering-can,
Rest and sleep and breakfast scorning.

Now the Sun has all but set,
On the very selfsame flowers
Still dispensing liberal showers
See, the gardener's happy yet.

CXCVI

WIND AND SEA

THE wind and the sea are sisters,
They moan for evermore,
One in the pine-tree branches
And one against the shore,
One for the land behind her,
One for the land before.

The wind is the sea's young brother,
The selfsame voice have they,
Sunlight and moonlight kiss them,
And then they kiss and play.
Sometimes they hate each other,
And then they fight all day.

‘What silly stuff you scribble !’

My fair love said to me.

“As if such things as those are,
Could ever strive or agree.
They are neither brothers nor sisters,
But just the Wind and the Sea !”

CXCVII

MISTAKEN

I NEVER thought that you could mourn
As other women do.
A blossom from your garland torn,
A jewel dropped that you had worn,
What could that be to you?

You never heard the human sound
Of wailing and despair.
Nor faithful proved nor faithless found,
You lived and moved in beauty crowned,
Content with being fair.

If I had known those eyes could weep
That used to sparkle so,
You had been mine to love, to keep,
But all too late I probed the deep
And all too late I know.

CXCVIII

MARAH

WHEN my dead went home to my dead,
And I was left alone,
Never a tear I shed,

And I never moaned a moan.
Never a word I said
When the dead went home to my dead,
And I was left alone.

CXCIX

“MY TRUE LOVE HATH MY HEART
AND I HAVE HIS”

NONE ever was in love with me but grief.

She wooed me from the day that I was born ;
She stole my playthings first, the jealous thief,
And left me there forlorn.

The birds that in my garden would have sung,
She scared away with her unending moan ;
She slew my lovers too when I was young,
And left me there alone.

Grief, I have cursed thee often—now at last
To hate thy name I am no longer free ;
Caught in thy bony arms and prisoned fast,
I love no love but thee.

CC

THE DESERTED HOUSE

THERE'S no smoke in the chimney,
And the rain beats on the floor ;
There's no glass in the window,
There's no wood in the door ;
The heather grows behind the house,
And the sand lies before.

No hand hath trained the ivy,
The walls are gray and bare ;
The boats upon the sea sail by,
Nor ever tarry there.
No beast of the field comes nigh,
Nor any bird of the air.

CCI

THERE

THERE, in that other world, what waits for me ?

What shall I find after that other birth ?

No stormy, tossing, foaming, smiling sea,

But a new earth.

No sun to mark the changing of the days,

No slow, soft falling of the alternate night,

No moon, no star, no light upon my ways,

Only the Light.

No gray cathedral, wide and wondrous fair,

That I may tread where all my fathers trod.

Nay, nay, my soul, no house of God is there,

But only God.

CCII

SONG

THY hand in mine, thy hand in mine,
And through the world we two will go,
With love before us for a sign,
Our faces set to every foe.
Thy hand in mine, thy hand in mine.

My heart in thine, my heart in thine,
Through life, through happy death the same.
We two will kneel before the shrine,
And keep alight the sacred flame.
My heart in thine, my heart in thine.

CCIII

USELESS

GOLD I can give—and what would it avail thee ?

'Tis manna that thou askest, not a stone.

How can'st thou learn, when all thy visions fail
thee,

To live by bread alone ?

I cannot grant thee one brief glimpse of heaven,

I cannot stay the tears that thou must weep.

Loved, lost in life, I cannot bid thee even

Forget thy woes in sleep.

CCIV

CHRIST'S FRIENDS

BEFORE Thine Altar on my bended knees,

When I remember those Thy friends that lie

Helpless and hopeless, sunk in misery,

O Christ, I love Thee, but I love not these.

Without them I may never hope to please
That friend of theirs who had no word to say
When from his side the rich man turned away.
O Christ, Thou lov'st not me. Thou lovest
these !

CCV

ALL ONE

BE still, my beating heart, be still !
There is no hope for thee to-night.
The fading of the wintry light
Has made a blackness of the hill.

Be still, be still, my beating heart !
For thee to-night there is no fear.
The moon has risen white and clear,
And we shall neither meet nor part.

CCVI

A CLEVER WOMAN

YOU thought I had the strength of men,
Because with men I dared to speak,
And courted Science now and then,
And studied Latin for a week ;
But woman's woman, even when
She reads her Ethics in the Greek.

You thought me wiser than my kind ;
You thought me " more than common tall ;"
You thought because I had a mind,
That I could have no heart at all ;
But woman's woman you will find,
Whether she be great or small.

And then you needs must die—ah, well !

I knew you not, you loved not me.

'Twas not because that darkness fell,

You saw not what there was to see.

But I that saw and could not tell—

O evil Angel, set me free !



CCVII

FRIENDS AND FOES

THEY fed me with poisonous food of praise,
They sung me to sleep with slumberous lays,
That I was beautiful, wise and strong,
The King was King, and could do no wrong.
When morning came, I awoke to find,
That I was ignorant, poor and blind.

So I sought me out a parcel of foes ;
They stripped me of all my daintiest clothes,

They sent me naked into the night,
Over stocks and stones I took my flight.
When morning dawned I awoke to see
That a babe had been, that a man might be.

CCVIII

POET AND SCULPTOR

As a maiden caught and bound
By the magic of a sound
Sweeter far than mortal ear
Ever yet attained to hear,
So I sat, and read, and read
What an ancient poet said,
“Man is weak, the Gods are strong,”
This the burden of the song.

When I saw the immortal faces,
Gods and Heroes, Nymphs and Graces,
Fauns and Satyrs hairy-eared,
Things no mortal ever feared,

Venus but a lady sweet,
Cupid playing at her feet,
“Nay!” I cried, “the poet’s wrong,
Gods are weak, but man is strong !”

CCIX

WHY is she set so far, so far above me,
And yet not altogether raised above?
I would give all the world that she should love
me,
My soul that she should never learn to love.

CCX

ALCÆSTIS TO ADMETUS

BUILD over me no marble monument,
To stand for ever high above the throng ;
Weave not my name in any wreath of song,
Hang up no picture of my life’s event.

The lasting stone would mock thy brief lament
Witness thy short affection over long,
The steadfast words thy changing passion
 wrong,
The painted features cry “ Repent ! repent ! ”

Live and forget me. Farewell ! Better so,
Than that I should be made the scorn of men,
Who mark the pageantry of grief, the show
Of feeling lighter than the wind, and then,
With lifted eyebrows, smile and whisper “ Lo !
A year is past, Admetus weds again ! ”

CCXI

I KNOW not how it is with me—the light
Is cruel to mine eyes since thou art dead,—
And yet, when all the hours of day are sped,
My grief cries louder in the silent night.

CCXII

FURNESS ABBEY

HERE would the aged pilgrim gladly stay
To rest him in these hospitable halls ;
Here where the night disconsolately falls
With song and story keep the night at bay.
Here did the shadowy brethren, white and grey,
Move to and fro within their stately walls,
And bind and loose the burdens of their thralls
Nor ever from the poor man turn away.
Alas ! within the Abbot's painted room,
Rich with armorial rose and Eastern palms,
The ferns are growing and the harebells bloom,
And blackberry for all who ask an alms,
Where, through the vale of nightshade in the
gloom,
The screech owl hoots his penitential psalms.

CCXIII

HELPLESS

ONLY for thee I fly the joyful sun
And mar the gladsome features of the day ;
But labour lost is all this labour done,
My travail gives thee not an hour of play.
My sleepless nights I consecrate to thee,
Thou canst not sleep the sounder, Love, for me.

My striving cannot bring thee rest from strife,
Nor all my weariness one moment's ease ;
Thou hast a secret bitterness to wife.
Love's born of woes, but not such woes as these.
Last woe of all, my life for thee I give,
But dying, I can never make thee live.

CCXIV

I ENVY not the dead that rest,
The souls that sing and fly ;
Not for the sake of all the Blest,
Am I content to die.

If ever men were laid in earth,
And might in earth repose,
Where spirits have no second birth—
Those, those, I envy, those.

My being would I gladly give,
Rejoicing to be freed ;
But if for ever I must live,
Then let me live indeed.

What peace could ever be to me
The joy that strives with strife ?
What blissful immortality
So sweet as struggling life ?

CCXV

FROM MY WINDOW

AN old man leaning on a gate
Over a London mews—to contemplate—
Is it the sky above—the stones below?
 Is it remembrance of the years gone by,
 Or thinking forward to futurity
That holds him so?

Day after day he stands,
Quietly folded are the quiet hands,
Rarely he speaks.

 Hath he so near the hour when Time shall
 end,
 So much to spend?
What is it he seeks?

Whate'er he be,
He is become to me
A form of rest.

I think his heart is tranquil, from it springs
A dreamy watchfulness of tranquil things,
And not unblest.

CCXVI

AFTER READING CERTAIN BOOKS

It's a great deal better to lose than win,
And virtue is nothing compared to sin,
And to get out of Heaven's the way to get in,
Said the Devil.

For the narrow way, as we know full well,
Is the way that leads a saint to Hell,
And who can rise that never fell?

Said the Devil.

And if God forgave, not when you would,
But whenever you did the best you could,
What room would there be for God to be good ?
Said the Devil.

CCXVII

THE FINDING OF LORD
STRATHMORE

(1715)

“WHO is he?” asked the seekers of the dead,
When they had come where cold and stiff he
lay.
“He was a man,” the old retainer said,
“Yesterday.”

CCXVIII

IMPROMPTU

GORGEOUS grew the common walls about me,
Floor and ceiling very Heaven became,
Music all within me and about me,

Brain on fire and heart aflame ;
Yet I could not speak for shame,
And I stammered when I tried to speak the
name.

Gone the light and vanished all the glory,
Clasping, grasping Fancy strives in vain ;
None can sing the song or tell the story,
Walls are only walls again,
Now the stammering tongue speaks plain.
O, the ache of dreary dullness worse than pain.

CCXIX

IN A VOLUME OF AUSTIN DOBSON

THE faded perfume of forgotten years,
The scent of withered rose-leaves sweetly
faint,
Old-world imaginations, fancies quaint,
And fun just dancing on the edge of tears ;

A boy's delight, a little maiden's fears,
A heroine of the days of patch and paint,
The gentle visions of an old French saint,
The treachery that repels not but endears.

CCXX

GHOSTS

COME, gentle ghosts, from that far-distant shore
Of those that look no more upon the sun,
We love you ever as we loved before,
We could not fear you now the day is done ;
One ghost alone I fear, the ghost of one
That lives—but loves and is beloved no more.

CCXXI

AT THE MADELEINE

I SAW a cross of burning gold
And jewels glorious to behold ;

Over it a golden crown,
All the people falling down.

I saw an ugly cross of wood,
On it there were stains of blood ;

Over it a crown of thorn,
Plaited for the people's scorn.

Cross of gold, no fruit was thine,
Nothing but the empty shrine.

Cross of wood, thou living tree,
The true vine clung fast to thee.

CCXXII

THE poet's heart without his gift of song,
The soldier's courage, and no sword to fight,
The prophet's hate of misery and wrong,
And yet no burning word to set it right !

CCXXIII

SOLO

LEAVE me alone ! my tears would make you
laugh,

Or kindly turn away to hide a smile.

My brimming granaries cover many a mile ;

How should you know that all my corn is chaff ?

Leave me alone ! my tears would make you
laugh.

Leave me alone ! my mirth would make you
weep.

I only smile at all that you hold dear ;

I only laugh at that which most you fear ;

I see the shallows where you sound the deep.

Leave me alone ! my mirth would make you
weep.

CCXXIV

TIRED of the daily round,
And tired of all my being ;
My ears are tired with sound,
And mine eyes with seeing.

CCXXV

LIFE AND JOY

It were too strong a bliss for thee to die ;
The tide of joy would so well round my heart,
That through the waves life never could depart,
And dying, I should live eternally.

It were too deep a joy for thee to live ;
Life would swoon back into the arms of
death,
Still feebly crying with her latest breath,
“ Myself alone is all that I can give.”

CCXXVI

HE who has lived in sunshine all day long,
His happy eyes
From too much light defending,
He cannot duly prize
One gleam of light at the day's ending.

CCXXVII

NOW

A CRAZY fool am I, and mad
As the maddest dreams of sleep.
I laughed when I was very sad,
And now for joy I weep.

The cold is here, the darkness drear,
The yellow gloom, the rain.
And, lo, in the winter of the year
'Tis spring with me again.

CCXXVIII

THAT this should be the common grief of all,
I dare not think it. No, to me alone
This grief is known,
Only on me the burning arrows fall.

The strong gods know that I have strength to
hide
The greatest of their gifts, the power to
grieve,
In silence ; and in silence I receive
Their last reward ; in silence I abide.

CCXXIX

NOT as I am thou art—and yet thou art.
To touch thy hand, I thought was touching thee.
I looked into thine eyes, the soul to see.
I felt thee in the beating of thy heart.
Hands, eyes, and heart thou hast not—yet thou
art.

CCXXX

LOVE, whereof purest light the shadow is,
What? shall thy guerdon be the general bliss?
Nay! for thou think'st to gather wealth in vain.
Labour—affliction—death—is all thy gain.
Love, that made Love, this only gift hath given
Of love itself—Heaven in exchange for Heaven.

CCXXXI

ONLY a little shall we speak of thee,
And not the thoughts we think ;
There, where thou art—and art not—words
would be
As stones that sink.

We shall not see each other for thy face,
Nor know the silly things we talk upon.
Only the heart says, “ She was in this place,
And she is gone.”

CCXXXII

NEL MEZZO DEL CAMMIN

O THAT we need not suffer
The dying of hopes and fears,
And knew no autumn between
The summer and winter of years !

CCXXXIII

SADNESS

I THINK that Sadness is an idiot born ;
She has no eyes to see the sun in heaven,
No ears to hear the music of the earth,
No voice to utter forth her own desire.

CCXXXIV

NONSENSE

I HAD a boat, and the boat had wings ;
And I did dream that we went a flying
Over the heads of queens and kings,
Over the souls of dead and dying,
Up among the stars and the great white rings,
And where the Moon on her back is lying.

CCXXXV

THEREFORE I wrote it, not that men should
buy—

I care not, I, to sell my soul for bread.

The craving senses must themselves be dead
Before the soul in such extremes could die.

Therefore I wrote it, not that men should cry,
“This is well thought of!” “This is bravely
said!”

For flattery’s poison is a thing to dread
More than the steel-tipped shafts of enmity.

CCXXXVI

WORDS

WORDS, dear companions! In my curtained
cot

I cooed and twittered like a nesting bird ;
And women spoke around me ; but no word
Came to my baby lips—I knew you not.

Yet laughter did I know. I have not learned
To laugh more gaily since I first began.
The reasons of his mirth are born in man ;
But man was born to laugh ere he discerned.

And tears I knew. Who taught me how to cry ?
Was it my mother's heart that whispered me ?
Tears have I wept since then that none could
see,
Nor laughed, as then I laughed, ere they were
dry.

Words, dear companions ! As the spirit grew,
I loved you more and more with every hour.
I felt the sweep, the whirlwind of the power
HE gave to man, when man created you.

Words, dear companions ! glittering, fair and
brave !

Rapt in your rapture I was whirled along,
Strong in the faith of old, the might of song,
Struck through the silent portals of the grave.

Words, dear companions ! Into you I drove
The dark dumb devil that besets the heart ;
Nature in you rose to a heavenly art,
And wrought on earth an airy heaven of love.

Ah, when ye leave me, will there yet remain
The laughter and the weeping all untaught ?
And will they, in the realm of perfect thought,
Teach me new words to sing of life again ?

CCXXXVII

SOME in a child would live, some in a book ;
When I am dead let there remain of me
Less than a word—a little passing look,
Some sign the soul had once, ere she forsook
The form of life to live eternally.

PRINTED BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON AND BECCLES.



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 652 774 1

UNIVERSITY OF CA. RIVERSIDE LIBRARY



3 1210 01285 3758

